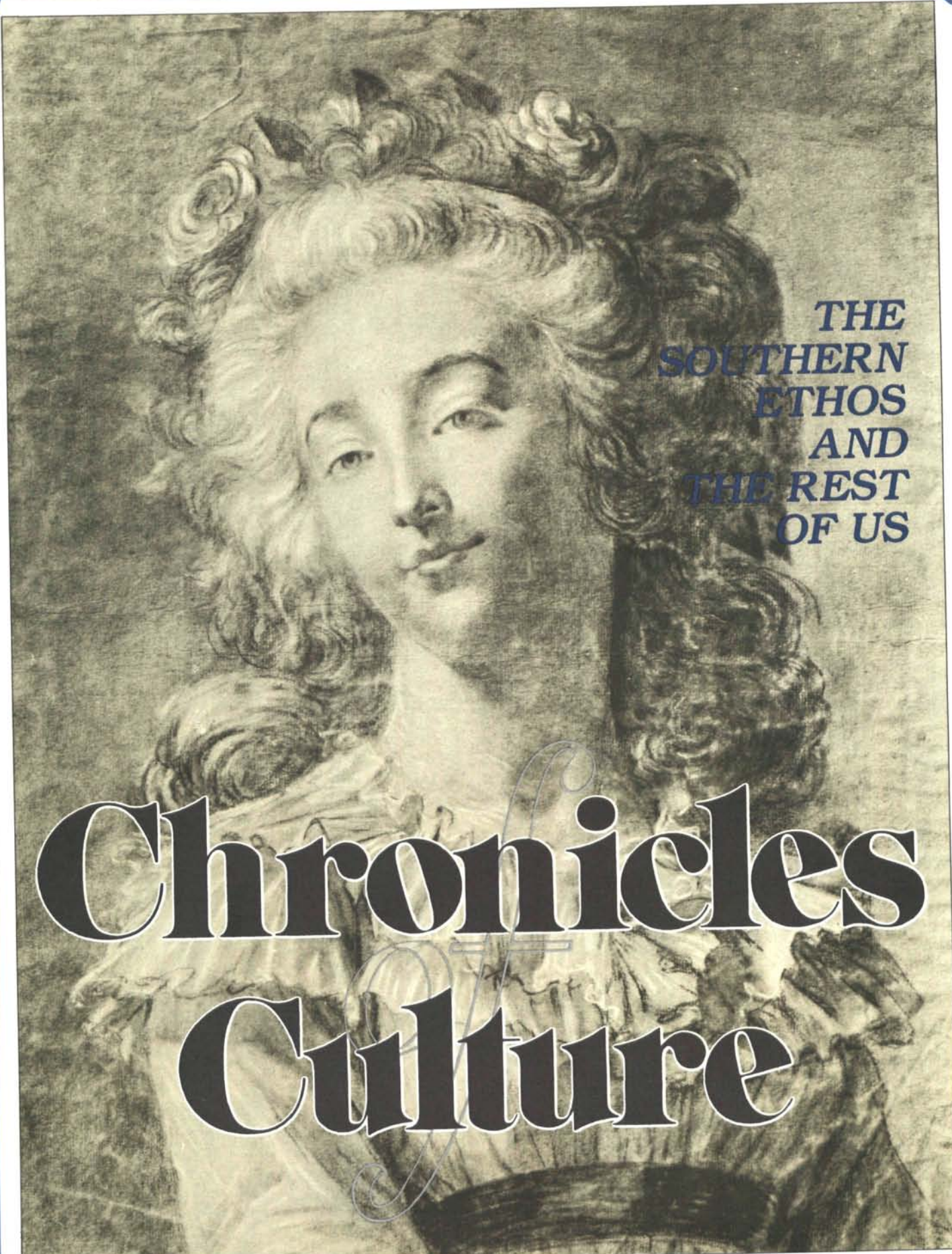




THE
SOUTHERN
ETHOS
AND
THE REST
OF US

Chronicles of Culture

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Erratum

In the January/February issue of *Chronicles of Culture*, in the "Commendables" section, Admiral Arthur W. Radford's *From Pearl Harbor to Vietnam* was mistakenly identified as having been published by Stanford University Press. It was actually published by The Hoover Institution Press, Stanford, California.

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The Monumental Literature of Dwarfs

Thompson: Comment; Carlson on Ferrell (*The Eisenhower Diaries*); Congdon on Ryan (*Equality*); Clarke on Irving (*The Hotel New Hampshire*); Levine on Handlin (*The Distortion of America*); Wilson on Malone (*The Sage of Monticello*); Pradl on Barzun (*Teacher in America, Three Talks*); Bower on Layman (*Shadow Man*); Klute on Alther (*Original Sins*); Eckhardt on French and Leach (*Shakespeare's Division of Experience, True Love and Perfect Union*); Scott on Fleming (*The Officers' Wives*); Murphy on Thomas and Wharton (*The White Hotel, Dad*); Steensma on Webb (*A Sense of Honor*); Commendables; In Focus; Waste of Money; Screen; Music; The American Proscenium; Journalism; Liberal Culture; Social Register.

The Southern Ethos and the Rest of Us



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COMMENT

Americans have probably wearied of things Southern, and who can blame them? The Carter-inspired wave of Southern chic did little to enhance the South's reputation. The boorishness of Ham and Billy, the chicanery of Bert, the cloying cuteness of Jody, the oratorical ineptitude of Jimmy and the tight-lipped rigidity of Rosalyn exemplified all the worst features of the South and none of the best. The Georgia crowd inflicted more damage upon the South than did four years of Yankee atrocities in the War Between the States. Self-respecting Southerners took to disguising themselves when they ventured north of the Mason-Dixon line; they dropped their "you-alls," hid their Roy Acuff records and sadly ordered Scotch whiskey instead of bourbon. Those were difficult years, and when the Carterites retreated back to Atlanta many Southerners joined their fellow Americans in a great sigh of relief.

It will take years for the Carter debacle—and the image of Southerners it projected—to fade from memory. But the sooner the better, for the South offers the republic a source of optimism at a time when many Americans have taken to sounding like Old Testament prophets foretelling the doom of ancient Israel. Proof of the South's vitality confronts one on every hand: the region's economy booms, race relations continue to improve and the cultural scene—H. L. Mencken's "Sahara of the Bozarts"—flourishes.

A recently published volume of essays entitled *Why the South Will Survive* highlights the spirit of optimism that prevails below the Potomac. Throughout the 20th century some of the South's most talented thinkers have wasted their energies in bemoaning the looming demise of their region as a distinctive entity. Surely the South would be destroyed by the rootlessness, commercialization and standardization of an urban, industrial America. The fifteen contributors to *Why the South Will Survive* forego the lugubrious pleasures of playing Cassandra; they have come to celebrate the South, not to sing its threnody. The South not only survives, it thrives.

Americans from regions beyond the South may be inclined to dismiss this volume as nothing more than another exercise in Yankee-baiting and grits-and-gravy chauvinism. Little of this exists in this book, however, for these men proclaim their Southernness without rejecting their Americanness. The fifteen essayists possess a spirit akin to that of the Virginians of the Revolutionary era who grounded their love of America in their devotion to their state. Thomas Jefferson and James Madison saw no conflict between their loyalty to Virginia and their eagerness to serve the new nation.

One of the great tragedies of Southern history arose from the force of events in the young republic that produced such a conflict. By 1860 the sons and grandsons of the Southern

Founders had to choose between two loyalties, and when they chose the South, all America suffered. In the secession movement of 1860-1861 Southerners imposed upon themselves an alienation and isolation from the rest of the country that would take a century to overcome. They turned in upon themselves, rejecting their Northern brothers, men guilty in the eyes of the South of promoting manufacturing at the expense of agriculture, of violating the letter and spirit of the Constitution and of encouraging abolitionist fanatics to spew their foul venom upon a decent and God-fearing folk. Defeat, devastation and the suffering visited upon the South by vindictive radical Republicans deepened the region's alienation. Southerners re-entered the Union after the war, but they clung to the memory of the Lost Cause; "Forget, hell!" became the motto of many a defeated Confederate soldier and his heirs. Southerners had become Americans again, but the legacy of defeat, along with economic backwardness and the decision to control blacks through *de jure* segregation, made them a people apart.

Before this situation would get better it got worse: the civil-rights movement of the 1950's and 1960's drove white Southerners further from the mainstream by making them the scapegoats for the entire nation's failure to permit blacks to share the full blessings of citizenship. As the nightly news brought Bull Connor's dogs, fire hoses and club-wielding policemen to television screens across the country, self-satisfied suburbanites sat in their lily-white bastions in Boston, Philadelphia, Cleveland and Los Angeles and clucked right-



ously about those barbaric rednecks. It was not easy to be a white Southerner in those days; the role of a scapegoat is a painful one.

How long ago all that seems now. In a mere decade or so the turmoil has subsided, the worst elements of an older South have been rejected or substantially mitigated, the best aspects preserved. And, most important, Southerners are as never before fully American. Drawing upon the strengths that have given them what the Virginia novelist Ellen Glasgow called a "vein of iron," Southerners can be of critical importance in the struggle to sustain and revitalize those aspects of American society that stand between us and national ruin. It would be deeply satisfying to many Southerners if the nation's former scapegoat could claim to be a uniquely virtuous segment of the population which now deigns to aid its benighted brethren outside the South. Ironically, though, Southern strengths are by and large American ones; but while the South has nurtured these qualities, much of the rest of the country has either jettisoned the old ways or at least stood by as the nihilists (disguised as liberators and enlighteners) have wreaked their damage. In part, then, the South offers America an image of America's former self, a self that can still be restored, though the barbarians are within the gates.

Southerners probably retain the greatest devotion to religion of any people within the United States. One need not agree to the proposition that Southerners will be disproportionately represented in heaven to see this; quite simply, though, Southerners remain more attached to church-going, Bible-reading and hymn-singing than other Americans. They know what sin is, and they are so old-fashioned as to use that very word. Sermons extolling Third World butchers rarely come from Southern pulpits; the region's preachers still believe that the greatest imperative is to snatch sinners from the flames of hellfire. And if Southerners are not—to use Flannery O'Connor's words—uniformly "Christ-centered," they are, at the very least, "Christ-haunted," and that counts for something in an age "haunted" only by neuroses, complexes and maladjustments.

The need to preserve and strengthen the family has become a critical concern in some circles in America. Well, if one wishes to see a strong sense of family, then he should look to Dixie. Anyone who has read even a bad Southern novel—much less one by, say, Faulkner or Eudora Welty—knows that the sorrows and joys of kinship run like a leitmotif through Southern fiction. Art imitates life in this case, for where else in America do second cousins court? Where else do three or more generations live together, often in the same house? Where else but in the South do the quotidian realities of existence focus so clearly on that intricate quilt work of blood kinship? To clinch the case: Has anyone

ever heard of a full-blooded family drama being played out in New Jersey?

For a people whose ancestors fought a fratricidal war to withdraw from the Union, Southerners have ranked, oddly enough, among the most unabashedly patriotic of Americans throughout the 20th century. Since the Spanish War of 1898 they have readily backed up their patriotism with a willingness to fight America's wars. Winston Churchill once called Lee's Army of Northern Virginia the finest body of troops the English-speaking peoples have ever produced. The dash, the fortitude, the courage that make this statement true have contributed immensely to America's military successes. A disproportionate number of Southerners have served as officers in the Marine Corps and the U.S. Army, and the grizzled old top sergeant from the South has become a cliché. When Congress has completed the destruction of military morale through affirmative action and vocational-education programs, perhaps someone will have the sense to turn to the Southern military tradition to restore the soldier's self-respect. In the meantime, though, men whose forbears rode with Lee and Jackson and Forrest will show scant enthusiasm for an army in which one's foxhole-mate convulsively clutches a hair dryer.

One could continue at length to tot up those qualities of the Southern people and of their society that can contribute to the greater good of the country at large. The South, for example, has progressed further than the rest of the country along that tortuous path that leads toward amity and mutual respect between whites and blacks. The Southerner's devotion to place, to that little patch of ground he calls home, serves as an antidote to the rootlessness from which so many Americans suffer. And who could argue against the contention that Southern manners, which help to alleviate friction in an impersonal society and to plane off the rough edges of urban incivility, might best be emulated by others?

But Southerners do not want everyone to be like them, any more than they wish to be like everyone else; the South has no desire to Southernize America, but its devotion to religion, family and country can certainly inspire other Americans. Southerners will eagerly unite with their fellow Americans who venerate these same values, and perhaps Southerners, whose ancestors helped to create this nation, can now supply leadership in the equally crucial movement to save it. A people crushed by defeat one hundred years ago may yet claim victory for the values they cherish. But that victory—should it come—will not be theirs alone: it will belong to all Americans.

—James J. Thompson, Jr.

Mr. Thompson is associate editor of Chronicles of Culture.

The Age of Criticism

Paul Hollander: *Political Pilgrims: Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba, 1928-1978*; Oxford University Press; New York.

by Lee Congdon

We live in the age of criticism. Critics of literature, art, drama and film enjoy enormous prestige, and schools of criticism sometimes overshadow the creative work itself. In philosophy the heirs of Descartes are ubiquitous; still determined to arrive at indubitable truth, critical philosophers are feverishly engaged in "unmasking" ideologies, exposing "contradictions" and "deconstructing" systems and traditions. Above all, however, ours is the age of social and political criticism. Never before has Western society been subjected to such searching critical scrutiny. No injustice, however small, escapes notice; no hypocrisy remains undetected. Ambitious theoretical attempts to design a *total* critique of modern life compete for the attentions of a large and receptive reading public. According to the adepts of "totality," what were once thought to be the inevitable concomitants of human orneriness are, on closer inspection, discovered to be integral elements of an all-pervasive system so monstrous and insidious that its victims are often unaware of their status. "False consciousness" blinds them to the truth. At a much lower level of sophistication, armies of "investigative reporters" (or, as they were once called, muckrakers) scurry about hoping to uncover corruption or questionable dealings in high places. In the depressing event of a slow news day, they are not averse to inventing a scandal. (For especially imagina-

tive efforts, one might even be awarded a Pulitzer Prize.) Still, the more articulate intellectuals set the tone, resolved as they are never to be taken in, particularly by their own government. So commonplace have these observations become that intellectuals are often defined with reference to their critical disposition.

In his new and important book, Paul Hollander challenges the notion that Western intellectuals can be understood as those who *invariably* assume a critical, skeptical stance. He does not deny, of course, that they stand in an adversary relationship to their own societies; quite the contrary. What he suggests instead is that their critical attitude is subject to selective and predictable suspension. In support of this contention, he has documented innumerable instances of gullibility or, if one prefers, the will to believe. More specifically, he has focused on the willingness of Western intellectuals to accept at face value the far-reaching claims made by totalitarian states—almost all of which are in the process of "building socialism." He begins with the 1930's, surveying Western apologies for the Soviet Union. In the darkest days of Stalin's tyranny, many intellectuals—including such luminaries as J. D. Bernal, Edmund Wilson, John Dewey and Harold Laski—contrived to see only a new and incalculably greater world,

a land of social justice and equality, of dedication and purpose, of self-sacrifice and community. In the home of socialism, prisons were humane and the Gulag Archipelago nonexistent. As late as 1944 Henry Wallace, who fancied himself to be of Presidential timber, was moved to sing the praises of Magadan in that vast, desolate region called Kolyma. Happily for him, he did not live to witness the appearance of two revelatory indictments: Robert Conquest's painstaking *Kolyma: The Arctic Death Camps* (1978) and Varlam Shalamov's chilling *Kolyma Tales* (1980). U.S. Ambassador Joseph E. Davies, another monument to ingenuousness, was dismayed by the doubts a handful of skeptics expressed concerning the authenticity of the Purge Trials. "To assume that this proceeding [the Pyatakov-Radek trial] was invented and staged . . . would be to presuppose the creative genius of Shakespeare and the genius of Belasco in stage production." And as for the Man of Steel himself, he was variously and affectionately described as democratic, modest, gentle and reserved.

By the 1960's, enthusiasm for the Soviet Union had largely, if not completely, dissipated. A new generation of radicals was coming of age, its members in search of a new, less-problematic utopia. Among several candidates, Cuba, North Vietnam and China appeared to offer the most promise. With respect to these dictatorships, Hollander has assembled an equally revealing collection of effusions from the 1960's and 1970's. Once more his principals are no-nonsense social critics like the late, unlamented Jean Paul Sartre, who assures us that Fidel Castro "can't stand injustice." According to Julius Lester, the black American writer, "Fidel is Cuba, Cuba is Fidel," a slogan that could only have been penned by someone blissfully unaware of Rudolf Hess's Party Day



Dr. Congdon is currently a fellow at The Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton University.

oratory: "Hitler is Germany, Germany is Hitler." Simone de Beauvoir and others report that the verbose *jefe* has done far more than simply establishing social justice; he has communicated to his people a new sense of purpose. Rather like Ho Chi Minh, the kindly father of unspoiled children who, for reasons unknown to the likes of Ramsey Clark, Jane Fonda, Staughton Lynd and "Father" Berrigan, became the targets of American bombers. More recently, radicals have discovered China, "a religious and highly moralistic society," Urie Bronfenbrenner opined with a perfectly straight face. This vast land, we are informed, is peopled by peace-loving, dedicated folk who have had the inestimable good fortune to be pointed in the direction of utopia by a latter-day Confucius—Mao Tse-tung. In the past decade substantial numbers of Americans, not all of them intellectuals, made pilgrimages to China. Almost without exception, they returned home wondering what had occasioned all the fuss about "Red" China.

That these Western perceptions were decidedly at variance with reality, however one chooses to define it, is intuitively obvious, and *evidence* to that effect has always been available. How, then, is one to explain the stubborn refusal of so many Western intellectuals to recognize the truth? What is one to make of this collective exercise in self-deception, this suppression of critical intelligence so impressively demonstrated when it is directed at Western societies? This is the thorny question that Hollander set out to answer. Having come of age in a country—Hungary—in which intellectuals such as Georg Lukács, Béla Fogarasi and József Révai (the Hungarian Zhdanov) combined sophisticated philosophical critiques of the West with unswerving fidelity to Stalin, the question was more than academic.

In an excellent chapter on the "techniques of hospitality," Hollander details the elaborate lengths to which totalitarian states go to disarm pilgrims who

are already disposed to be sympathetic. Yet hospitality alone does not account for the totalitarian temptation. Hollander concludes that the answer to his question is to be found in the intellectuals themselves. This is not to say that he dismisses his subjects as psychological misfits; rather, he argues that intellectuals have been particularly sensitive to the process of secularization, to what Max Weber called the disenchantment of the world. So long as confidence in progress persisted, secularization was

"... the book is not so much fun as it could be. ... Like many conservatives, he suffers, even in the age of Reagan, from delusions of persecution."

—Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.
New York Times Book Review

not an insupportable burden, but with the dissolution of that faith in the 20th century, intellectuals awoke to a world without meaning or purpose. It was the search for meaning and for a shared sense of community, the latter also undermined by the corrosive imperatives of modern life, that directed their attention to states that preached a faith unmixed with doubt, confusion and ambiguity.

Ironically then, the intellectuals have come to hate the secular world their critical predecessors did so much to create. Indeed, as Hollander makes clear, their unexamined faith in totalitarian states is a *function* of their profound alienation from the West, especially from the United States. With respect to North Vietnam, for example, Susan Sontag confessed that "it was really America 'the strong' that obsessed me—the contours of American power, of American cruelty, of American self-righteousness." Those states that are most liable to censure in radical circles—Taiwan, South Korea, South Africa—are guilty by association. "The criticism directed at these societies," Hollander writes, "derived its fervor from the possibility of linking whatever deplorable conditions existed in the countries concerned, in some manner, to American policies." By any reasonable

standard, Khomeini is far more despicable than the Shah, but even while he held the American hostages, the Ayatollah received a more sympathetic hearing than his predecessor ever did. The Muslim mountebank may be a fanatic and a judicial murderer, but his anti-American credentials are in very good order.

Perhaps this is the place to enter the customary disclaimer. I do not suggest, and certainly Hollander does not, that

there is nothing to criticize in the United States. The point is that the intensity of anti-American sentiment among those who are, after all, quite at liberty to articulate their discontent with impunity, cannot be explained by cataloguing incidences of injustice. Why do so many American intellectuals hate their own country—far more even than they hate capitalism—with such single-mindedness? Hollander is surely right to point to the impact of secularization and the consequent loss of moorings. But Dostoyevsky might, perhaps, help us to probe deeper.

In his own time, Dostoyevsky was acutely aware of the Russian intellectuals' hatred of their motherland and idealization of the West or, in the case of the Slavophiles, of pre-Petrine Russia. To be sure, czarist Russia was open to criticism on a good many counts. Yet the unrelenting hostility of the intelligentsia was not proportionate to the evils of existing social and political arrangements. An extraordinary judge of the complexities of human motivation, Dostoyevsky perceived that the intellectuals' hatred of Russia was rooted in self-hatred. Having lost their faith in Christianity, they were no longer moved by the Church's greatest contribution to civilization—the teaching of love and forgiveness. Unable to accept forgive-

ness for themselves—here one thinks of Raskolnikov and Stavrogin—they could not extend it to others. Hence their extreme sensitivity to injustice, a sensitivity that was itself grounded in Christian teachings—but it was not mitigated by compassion. In the end, they came to despise not only the czar and his government, but also the people in whose name they claimed to speak. So fierce was their rage for justice that they reprobated unjust men and women—everyone, that is, including themselves. Often “religious” by nature, they were Christian heretics for whom only perfect justice in this world could vindicate God’s creation. In *The Brothers Karamazov* Ivan hates this world because little children are made to suffer; having permitted his hatred to fester, he is obsessed by his depraved father and finally inspires Smerdyakov, his bastard half-brother (and alter ego), to commit patricide. Only Alyosha, the youngest of the Karamazovs, is able to love his father (while deploping his conduct) *as he is* and to accept forgiveness for his own sins.

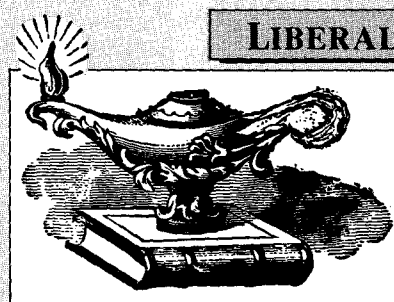
Love and forgiveness constitute the leaven of civilization and the principal historical heritage of Christianity. Arrayed against those such as the “incorruptible” Robespierre, who would sooner have us revert to barbarism than to live with injustice, are those who affirm the pivotal importance of what Kierkegaard called “the teleological suspension [not revocation] of the ethical.” Parents who love their children without laying down as a condition that their conduct always be above reproach. Patriots who love their country, right or wrong. (Those who “love” their country only when it is right may be among the just, but they are not patriots.) The Illinois governor who pardoned Nathan Leopold without feeling constrained to free every inmate. The President who thought it better to pardon his disgraced predecessor—but not his accomplices—than to debase any further the nation’s highest office. We are all familiar with great works of literature in which acts of humanity

similar to these are central. Here I mention only those profound plays of Shakespeare: *The Merchant of Venice*, *Measure for Measure* and *The Tempest*.

If, then, Dostoyevsky is right to emphasize the sovereign significance of love and forgiveness, the consequences of the kind of intellectual treason we have been discussing will be very great. Hollander is well aware of this, as his perceptive remarks in the concluding chapter attest. However lofty their genesis, ideas do filter down to the public at large, particularly when they are adopted and popularized by the newspapers and television. Consider the passion for muckraking that presently informs all major network news programs viewed by millions of Americans night after night. As Hollander rightly observes, “the cumulative effect of this steady debunking and preoccupation with the ills of society intensifies the sense of malaise and alienation arising out of problems and frustrations, many of which are unlikely to be resolved.” Recently Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. dismissed this argument out of hand, adding that “others may think that our society needs better, not less, criticism” (*New York Times Book Review*, October 11, 1981). One can only surmise that the American historian and social critic has never read, or has forgotten,

the history of the Weimar Republic.

If any of Hollander’s judgments are open to question, it is surely his uncharacteristic suggestion that “dreams of social perfectibility and human liberation are by themselves attractive, and life without them would be impoverished in some intangible way.” On the contrary, utopian dreams are neither attractive nor benign. They reflect that life-denying impulse that infects so much of modern thought. Utopias always presuppose the advent of “new men,” whose nature must be totally different from our own; the more obsessed one is with these imagined creatures, the more disgust one feels for living human beings. We would do well to ponder what Camus wrote in *The Rebel*: “Is it possible eternally to reject injustice without ceasing to acclaim the nature of man and the beauty of the world? Our answer is yes.” I would add only that the most exquisite beauty to be found in this world is not that of nature, however awesome, but that expressed by the “quality of mercy.” In the final analysis, the destiny of the West may well depend upon our ability to revive our collective self-respect and to carry on the practice of criticism within the context of a resolute defense of Western traditions. □



Homo Sapiens

Dr. Carl Sagan, media star and sometime university professor, reveals the magnitude of vision that lies at the heart of today’s scientism. In the *New York*

LIBERAL CULTURE

Times Book Review of November 29, 1981, Dr. Sagan writes:

For myself, the idea that life arises on many worlds through the interaction of matter and energy—that is, by the consequences of the laws of physics and chemistry—seems a sufficiently ennobling prospect to satisfy anyone’s predilections for the holy . . .

We presume that Professor Sagan has no difficulty seeing himself as the offspring of a well-functioning butane lighter. No metaphysical chagrin whatsoever. □

On Soft Determinism & Ambivalent Appeasement

Thomas Sowell: *Ethnic America: A History*; Basic Books; New York.

Anne Wortham: *The Other Side of Racism: A Philosophical Study of Black Race Consciousness*; Ohio State University Press; Columbus, Ohio.

by John C. Caiazza

In the political and ideological climate which currently surrounds the issue of ethnicity in America, this book is a bombshell. The issues of race, discrimination and welfare have become so highly charged politically and emotionally, with so much at stake in benefits from the government and, no less importantly, in prestige and self-respect, that Sowell's attempt merely to tell the truth has had an explosive effect. The reason is not hard to find.

"Ethnic America," as Sowell calls it, has been an experiment in which men and women of every race and continent have tried to live together as Americans while retaining certain portions of their pre-American heritage. Despite persecutions, slavery, race riots, Jim Crow laws, ethnic and religious discrimination and outright warfare against the Indian tribes, America is the most successful multiethnic nation in the world. Sowell writes: "The peopling of America is one of the great dramas in all of human history." Indeed, one notices that foreign criticism of America's racial problems tends to cease in those nations which have acquired a race problem of their own, as in England, India or Uganda.

Tolerance of other peoples, their mores, attitudes and lifestyles, is, in fact, more pronounced in the United States than in most other nations, and

Dr. Caiazza is currently working on a book tentatively entitled A Conservative Social Philosophy.

for good reason, for mutual forbearance is a necessity if we are to live together peaceably and to prosper as a nation. However, the mutual respect which America fosters among its diverse ethnic groups can be extended too far, namely when academicians, politicians and government officials refuse to recognize that any unique characteristic distinguishes groups from one another, especially if it is at all negative.

While it is frequently necessary to overlook such differences, to make allowances for them or to look at them in a benign light, denying such characteristics lends an air of hypocrisy to the acts and statements of public officials. Furthermore, it leads to the assumption that since there are no substantive differences among us as groups, then the only reason for differences in economic success or social status is discrimination, be it intentional or "structural." This encourages an inquisitorial attitude among public officials, who try to ferret out injustices where none visibly exist, and who seek to equalize the conditions of groups which are not equal—in educational attainment or acculturation—to the demands of urban living. Finally, it leads to the establishment of a doctrine of official "truth": that American society is inherently unjust and the American people inherently racist. It is this perverted "truth" which Sowell has dramatically exposed and that exposure has caused a fierce reaction against him and his book.

Ironically, Sowell's style is so low-key, with none of Moynihan's dash on the same (or any other) topic, that some of the controversial points in the study may be lost. Therefore, some of them are worth listing, even though Sowell has argued for many of them in such other of his works as *Race and Economics*. (1) Ethnicity and race are legitimate categories by which to attempt to understand social behavior; (2) ethnic groups have progressed in America

in a constant and roughly comparable manner; (3) education is a result, not a cause, of ethnic economic progress; (4) I.Q. level is culturally determined, i.e. an ethnic group's average I.Q. tends to test higher over time like other indices of socioeconomic acculturation; (5) politics is not the best avenue of advance for ethnic groups, since those which have chosen this route have progressed more slowly than those which have neglected it; (6) welfare benefits have impeded rather than aided the progress of those groups at the bottom of the ladder; (7) culture—not wealth, education or genetic inheritance—is the key influence on an ethnic group's success in America; (8) all ethnic groups have been subject to discrimination but have overcome it; and (9) blacks and Hispanics need no special attention in order to progress as other ethnic groups have. All of these points contravene one accepted opinion or another and, taken together, indicate that a policy of "benign neglect" would be the best policy for our judges, bureaucrats and politicians to follow in matters of ethnicity and race.

A book of this sort raises so many issues that one cannot possibly comment on all of Sowell's points. However, one thing worthy of further comment, and one which is likely to get lost in all the fireworks that this book has already set off, is that it is undergirded by certain critical scientific assumptions. Sowell's book, while subtitled "A History," is also a sociological analysis, which means that the first premise of his study is a form of cultural determinism. That is, in common with most social scientists, Sowell finds it necessary to use a cause-and-effect relationship to explain human behavior. Because he is a sociologist and not, for example, a Freudian psychologist, his concept of determinism is one in which human behavior is influenced (though not controlled, it is important

to note, because Sowell's is a "soft" determinism) by the social whole of which he is a member, in this case his ethnic group. For example, if a man is of Italian extraction, according to Sowell, it is likely that he shares the behavioral characteristics of Italians as a group, e.g. he is devoted to his family, a wine-drinker but not an alcoholic, etc.

Cultural determinism allows Sowell to explain ethnic behavior as the result of two forces: first, the cultural heritage

ences as well, which Sowell does skillfully, with insight and compassion.

For the point surely is not to list gleefully the derogatory points of various ethnic groups, as if in reading Sowell, we were being allowed to liberate some dark impulse within ourselves. By placing individuating characteristics of ethnic groups in an historical context, Sowell is able to explain, as well as point out, both the positive and negative character-

cynical governments. Thus they have, as a *cultural* rather than as a strictly religious or genetic inheritance, a sympathy for the underdog based on historical fact: a tolerant or liberal central authority has been better for them than an intolerant or illiberal one. We can speculate that, in effect, when a Jewish radical agitates against a policy of the U.S. government, he is acting the same way his grandfather acted toward the czar.

The Irish proclivity for machine politics, replete with patronage and favoritism, and based on an exchange of personal loyalties, is well known. The last of the old-time, big-city mayors in this tradition is barely five years in his grave, and his power was not only regional but national; Republican partisans still accuse Richard Daley of stealing the 1960 Presidential election for another Irishman, John Kennedy. Yet once we recognize this fact, an explanation of it is not hard to find, as Sowell points out, in the three centuries that Ireland suffered under the oppression of the English. During that time, all the official apparatus that ruled Ireland, including the established church, was that of an alien power imposed for the advantage of the oppressors and against the will of the native population. Life went on for the Irish only under cover, as it were, for outside the network of formal legitimacy, they had to install their own unofficial network based not on legally enforceable agreements and responsibilities, but on loyalty to their heritage, the Roman Catholic Church and to each other. Politics for the Irish in Ireland was personal and explicitly nonofficial, an attitude which they imported with them to America. Surely it was not difficult for an Irishman who landed in Boston to identify the old ruling families of that city, who, after all, were of English descent, with their oppressors back home.

Unlike either the Jews or the Irish, the Italians in America have not been prominent in politics, either ideologically as have the Jews or pragmatically as have the Irish. Italians are known, however,

"[*Ethnic America*] is fiction without a plot."

— *The Nation*

"On the whole [Sowell's] book might have benefited from more moralizing and less pragmatism."

— *Newsweek*

"'Ethnic America' is a book that uses history to promote a conservative ideology."

— *New York Times Book Review*

that ethnic groups bring with them, and second, the new conditions that such groups face in America. Thus, he points out that the Jews brought with them an urban heritage which aided them in settling into the cities, whereas groups such as the Irish, Mexicans and Italians, whose heritage was agricultural, had a great deal more difficulty in being assimilated. The same difficulty, according to Sowell, presently afflicts those blacks who have migrated from the farmlands of the South to the cities of the North. If the comparison is valid, then the progress of ghetto blacks is about the same as that of previous immigrants who came from an agricultural background, although they, of course, came from overseas and not from another part of America. The utility of this kind of comparison is that it highlights the commonality of the responses of various groups to the conditions in which they lived in America, and the commonly negative response that they met with from "native" Americans, often members of groups who had lived in the same manner and in the same slums a generation before. Such comparisons allow one to examine differ-

istics of different groups. A good example can be found in the political attitudes of various groups; for purposes of illustration we can take the Jews, the Irish and the Italians. The Jews as a group have long been known for their attachment to left-wing politics, and Sowell quotes the scholar who said that while, "... only five percent of Jews were radicals, fifty percent of radicals were Jews." Now a great deal of intellectual energy has been spent trying to avoid or explain the fact (and we may take it as a fact) that Jews have a higher than average tendency to participate in liberal or radical causes. The usual explanation is that the messianism and zeal of the Jewish religion has been secularized into political utopianism. What is largely overlooked in this account is that the Jewish religion has long since lost its messianism and that a good part of its zeal has been transferred to the cause of Israel. Sowell, however, provides us with a less-strained explanation, namely that during the many centuries that they lived in Europe and Russia, the Jewish people existed as a persecuted minority and were often used as scapegoats by

for other activities which might seem to compensate for the lack of political activity—namely, organized crime and reliance on the nuclear family. Indeed, the two seem to reinforce each other and to intermingle, a fact fixed indelibly in the national consciousness by the two *Godfather* films. The Mafia, however, though present in southern Italy, was not, Sowell maintains, something the Italians brought with them, for when they arrived in America it was their “turn” to take over organized crime, succeeding the Jews and the Irish who had by then taken up less aggressive pursuits. The arrival of prohibition made organized racketeering much bigger than it had been previously. Further, as Sowell points out, the intense family loyalties and relative freedom from alcoholism of Italians aided their survival in the violent and competitive business of selling illegal whiskey. Yet the point here is not so much that America provided a grim opportunity in which the traditional Italian sense of family made them successful, but rather that this same sense of family had political effects as well. Italian reliance on the family is typical mainly of southern Italians, for whom this was a form of protection against both their own nobility and the waves of invaders who overran that area continually for many centuries. These people were mostly peasants completely dependent on and subject to whatever external power was in charge. Loyalty to the family also proscribes giving loyalty to any group or organization outside the family, including the civil government and the Church. Carried to America, a pattern emerges in which Italians rely less on government, civic organizations or public welfare than other groups; this has made them less prominent in politics, both civil and ecclesiastical, than in proportion to their numbers.

A general pattern emerges, when comparing the Jews, the Irish and the Italians, in which previous cultural conditioning influences their reaction to

conditions in America. At the same time, Sowell also shows the differences among the reactions of each of these groups as a result of specific characteristics of their heritage. Of course, Sowell doesn’t completely explain the differences in the “old country” patterns of culture themselves, i.e. how the Jews, Irish and Italians originally got that way. For instance, why did continued oppression force the Irish closer to Catholicism and the southern Italians away from it? Sowell makes a stab at it but it is not very convincing. This is a chicken-and-egg question, however, for no determinism, even a soft one like Sowell’s, can ever completely explain the complexities of human behavior.

One last point about Sowell’s book itself: it takes its place in a phalanx of new and important scholarly works by conservative authors, and it is this intellectual effort which may be the basis for an enduring conservative politics. Whatever happens to the Reagan administration, this body of work, now prominently including Sowell’s, will remain to provide the basis for a new and more realistic understanding of social reality.

* * *

How happy will integrationists be when they read Anne Wortham’s *The Other Side of Racism*? After all, if we cannot rest until we have representation of minority people in the professions, business and academe equal to their proportions in the general population, then the same expectation ought to apply to ideology and politics as well. Indeed, some civil-rights spokesmen have encouraged black participation in the Republican Party, although I suspect they would rather advise others to be Republicans than to do so themselves. As we extend this expectation, there ought to be not only black liberals and socialists, but also black conservatives and, dare we say it, black libertarians. In Anne Wortham we have a black writer who is also, as this well-argued book testifies, a libertarian. She has drunk deeply at

the well of Ayn Rand and Nathaniel Branden and has applied their theories to an analysis of the psychology of the civil-rights movement. Yet when integrationists read this book, they will not be happy; indeed, they will be angry as hell.

Not that all their anger will be unjustified, for libertarianism has tremendous weaknesses as well as strengths when applied to a subject as intransigent and complex as race. The peculiar character of the libertarian approach is to emphasize the nature and status of the individual at the expense of the role society plays in the establishment of our values, nature and behavior. As one would expect, Ms. Wortham’s book concentrates on individual psychology by providing the reader with profiles of five types of race-conscious blacks. These profiles take up about half the book and include portraits of “The Conventional Integrationist,” “The Power-seeking Nationalist,” “The Spiritual Separatist,” “The Independent Militant” and “The Ambivalent Appeaser.” The discussions in this section are frequently brilliant, with their clear and unflinching analyses of, for example, how guilt is used to manipulate the response of white society to the advantage of blacks. Less coherent, however, is Ms. Wortham’s venture into sociological theory—which frequently degenerates into jargon, as in her tedious attempt to connect Branden’s theory of self-esteem with Reisman’s treatment of marginal character. This book vividly illustrates the respective strengths and weaknesses of libertarianism when applied to America’s race problem.

On the positive side, *The Other Side of Racism* presents a good argument that white discrimination against blacks has its corresponding vice in the Federal government’s affirmative-action programs, which discriminate against whites on behalf of blacks. The point that affirmative action and white racism are two sides of the same coin is not new, but Ms. Wortham makes it more provocatively than most. The contradictions of the black-pride movement,

which Ms. Wortham calls "spiritual separatism," are revealed, as in the case where blacks assert the superiority of black culture while at the same time contending that they deserve compensatory treatment because they have been victimized by white society. Ms. Wortham also points out that many blacks and members of ethnic groups inflate their own sense of self-esteem and hide their individual inadequacies by identifying themselves solely as members of their race, religion or culture.

But here lies the rub, for Ms. Wortham, good libertarian that she is, assumes that an individual's self-worth comes only from his own efforts, not from his identification with a social collective. Thus she condemns as weakness any attempt by blacks to take pride in themselves simply as blacks. No doubt such an effort may be subject to all the pathological weaknesses Miss Wortham discovers there—the contradictions, self-deceptions, hidden weaknesses, bluster and intimidation—but surely it is, basically, a healthy thing. Her strictures against black pride and other black responses to living in a white society say as much about her libertarian bias as they do about the realities of the black situation.

Libertarianism brings to an analysis

of race and other social problems a rationalistic egoism which portrays the individual not only as being capable of directing his own destiny, but as being responsible for the very circumstances which influence and sometimes direct individual behavior. Thus, it is no excuse to say that someone cannot help himself, for libertarians say in effect that a person's attitude defines social reality. They refuse to recognize that our human natures are as much social as individual. For we really cannot direct our own destinies to the extent that one of Ayn Rand's fictional heroes can, nor are we permitted (by moral laws with far more legitimacy than those of the state) to make up our own set of values as the libertarians assert. What we are really free to do is to recognize an objective morality and purpose which exist beyond our desires and wills and not to erect such a reality on our own. The application of the libertarian point of view to the race problem finally has a weird conclusion, for Ms. Wortham comes very close to blaming the evil of racism on its victims (significantly she denies the concept of original sin). Speaking of a victim of discrimination, she says, "[h]is sense of inferiority existed *before* discrimination occurred, and it is his sense of inferiority that al-

lows discrimination or antipathy to have such a debilitating effect on him . . . his actual feelings of inferiority are always self-imposed."

She argues, in effect, that the victims of racism become its victims only because they allow themselves to be affected by the attitude of others—as if it were possible not to be! And, again, she refuses to admit the legitimacy of black pride on the principle that what an individual has not made by his own efforts, he is not logically entitled to as a source of self-esteem. Yet, why not? Why is pride of family, or nation, or culture or, yes, even race, illegitimate except on the basis of that theory of rational egoism that denies to man both his social reality and his intuitions of value that cannot always be fully articulated? The great failure of libertarianism in treating the race problem is twofold: it denies that racism is an evil that actually affects unwilling victims, and it refuses to acknowledge the legitimacy of racial (and ethnic) identity. The great strength of the libertarian position lies in its exposure of the injustice inherent in the affirmative-action policies of the Federal government.

But even in its analysis of affirmative action there is a difficulty in the libertarianism espoused by Ms. Wortham, for this philosophy claims that the sole function of the state is to protect the sovereign rights of individuals. But in order to do this the state must promulgate laws which encourage us to respect each other's rights. This is the dilemma of the libertarian, for the protection of rights implies what he sees as an unacceptable intrusion of state power over the individual, inasmuch as the state must try to influence people to act and think in a certain way. That is why the Founding Fathers encouraged free expression of religion and why America has a stake in the establishment of racial amity, harmony and justice. Despite the insights it offers, libertarianism has only a limited contribution to make toward the achievement of this goal. □

LIBERAL CULTURE

The Gist of Deviation

The *Village Voice* of November 25-December 1, 1981, offers a striking example of how a dead writer is, by nature, unable to say, "Wait a minute . . . that's not what I had in mind . . ." New York City Council president Carol Bellamy read a passage from *Intruder in the Dust*:

Some things you must always be unable to bear. Injustice and outrage and dishonor and shame. No matter how young you are or how old you have got. Not for kudos and not for



money in the bank, neither. Just refuse to bear them.

This was supposed to mean that William Faulkner urged all of us to accord homosexuals the right to tutor little boys in the New York public schools and serve as cops in order to protect S&M bars. □

Curricula of Malice and Mistake

David E. Shi: *Matthew Josephson, Bourgeois Bohemian*; Yale University Press; New Haven, Connecticut.

Bertram D. Wolfe: *A Life in Two Centuries*; Stein & Day Publishers; New York.

by Paul Gottfried

Of these two biographies one shows, although unwittingly, the cruelty of being afflicted by the divine curse of madness, while the other demonstrates the possibility of redemption for at least the fortunate few. The eulogistic study of the career of Matthew Josephson gives evidence of a deluded life untouched by lucid moments, except for a short time spent on Wall Street. Throughout most of his eighty years Josephson combined a sybaritic, wildly adulterous existence (made possible by shrewd investments on the stock market) with literary and financial support for the Communist Party and its numerous satellite organizations. An undaunted fellow traveller, he would certainly qualify even in death for a Lillian Hellman Award for American Citizenship. One of Shi's final tributes to Josephson is that this old-fashioned radical easily found his way into the New Left. Always contemptuous of "anti-Communists on the Left," he considered George McGovern a fitting embodiment of his own political ideals. One gets the impression that the Nixon victory in 1972 helped edge Josephson over the brink. If so, he left many others, possessed of less elegance but more stridency, to fill his shoes.

A major problem with Shi's biography, other than its cloying praise of the subject, is its neglect of serious questions concerning Josephson's development. Why would a man of afflu-

ence turn with loathing against that society which allowed him both to prosper and to criticize it? To cite McCarthyism, as Shi does, as the reason for Josephson's political stance is to place the cart before the horse. Like Lillian Hellman, Josephson had been apologizing for the Soviet Union, while denouncing its American critics, long before the junior Senator from Wisconsin had achieved political notoriety. More to the point, why did Josephson differ from other former communists who, generally appalled by Soviet butchery, recognized that their god had failed? Why did he spend his later life, after having formally abjured the Party, blasting leftist intellectuals who criticized Soviet Russia or who praised the United States?

The autobiography of Bertram Wolfe is both more informative and less sentimental. Wolfe devotes most of his voluminous memoirs to discussing his activities as a communist: his attraction to the Party in the aftermath of the First World War (after having opposed America's entry into it), his journalistic activities as a Party member in the 20's and his gradual defection, starting in 1929, as the result of Stalin's attempted suppression of his own subgroup within the American Communist Party. Wolfe and his friends followed a maverick radical, Jay Lovestone, who advocated more American control over their Party organization. The story of the Lovestoneites, some of whom, like Wolfe, had to flee for their lives from Russia, is probably the most interesting section of the autobiography. Not only does it show the crisis of faith through which genuinely decent, if deluded, men had to pass before recognizing the evil of Soviet communism; it also depicts the peculiarly American character of the young communists, mostly of German and Russian Jewish extraction, who took their case for a more decentralized Party organization to Moscow. Wolfe

records their profound shock as they encountered the Soviet system at work, as they heard the peremptory judgment made by the leader of world communism amidst his cheering underlings and as they experienced the use of intimidation afterwards to enforce Stalin's decisions. That some Lovestoneites yielded to these pressures is entirely understandable. That others chose to resist indicated their courage, although even the anti-Stalinist Lovestoneites, it should be noted, did not grasp at once the full evil of the Soviet system.

In my opinion, Wolfe remains far easier to respect as a communist than Josephson as a bourgeois bohemian. One may, of course, object that I am making this judgment while being aware of the ultimate positions toward which both figures moved. While I am liable to this charge, I would, nonetheless, assert that there are significant personal differences among various radicals. Some may indeed appeal more than others even to those who reject their ideological premises. Wolfe gives me the impression of being someone who entered, actually co-founded, the American Communist Party in 1919 out of genuine, though misguided, moral concern. Like some others growing to manhood during the First World War, he opposed that bloody struggle, which he correctly considered an act of civilizational suicide. He joined the Party because, unlike Wilson and his government, Lenin did oppose the War, although Wolfe failed to understand that the communists did not take their anti-war stand out of pacifist sentiment or reverence for the "Old Europe." The communists in fact set out to overthrow Western societies by turning workers against their governments and their countrymen. Despite his naiveté, Wolfe joined the communists as a man with honorable goals, and he showed his allegiance through years of arduous serv-

Dr. Gottfried is senior editor of Modern Age.

ice. When the Party at last appeared to him to be the instrument of a foreign tyranny, Wolfe abandoned it even at the risk of his life and transferred his support to rival radical groups which were then still fighting the communists for control of the far left.

Josephson, by contrast, dabbled in politics as he did in adultery and learning. Spending most of his adult years at the edge of the Communist Party, he took fashionable stands and signed petitions decorated by the names of other "bright intellectuals." His obliviousness to Soviet imperialism and to America's virtues may be entirely understandable, given his utterly frivolous existence. His one apparent contribution to historical scholarship is an ele-

gantly written but scantily documented account of the Gilded Age. When his one-sided description of grasping "robber barons" came under critical scrutiny soon after the Second World War, Josephson predictably denounced his critics as apologists for capitalist oppression. The charge rang hollow in view of the impeccably liberal credentials of some of his critics and the recognizably dispassionate judgments of others, like Allan Nevins. Unfortunately, age failed to bring him the slightest maturity. His later years were passed in the same graceless fashion as his early ones: chasing other men's wives and sniping at simple Americans who provided him with the opulence he enjoyed to the fullest. □

worth the time. Let it suffice to say that Robert Kennedy conceived an implacable jealousy of and hatred for Roy M. Cohn, and Mr. Cohn was indicted three times on criminal charges by a Kennedy-appointed U.S. Attorney. He was acquitted on all three occasions, but, according to this book, he remains subject to an IRS investigation (as he has been for the past twenty years). All this is reason enough to stamp a certain grimness on Mr. Cohn's countenance, and for him to regard the human race with a certain wariness.

In *How To Stand Up for Your Rights—and Win!* Mr. Cohn does not conjure up mythical cases, à la the Harvard School of Law. He cites real people who were brutally mistreated by the police, or subjected to the vindictiveness of divorcing wives or husbands or spurned lovers, or cheated by insurance firms unwilling to keep their promises to the injured, or driven to desperation by heartless civil "servants." Nor does Mr. Cohn cite only cases in which the injured were provided redress. Court rulings in the United States are, alas, as whimsical as those rendered by the Caliphs of *Arabian Nights*. The separate legal systems of the fifty states and thousands of counties, in addition to Federal statutes, have provided us with a myriad of laws that is all but impossible to penetrate. One judge whom Mr. Cohn cites rendered a ridiculous verdict

Judiciary Pugilism

Roy M. Cohn: *How To Stand Up for Your Rights—and Win!*; Simon & Schuster; New York.

by Otto J. Scott

The jacket on his latest book shows Roy M. Cohn looking at the world through lowering eyes and with a tight mouth, like a man ready to fight. This, from all reports, is appropriate. Mr. Cohn is a noted fighter with whom no one today would lightly tangle.

It was not always thus, and therein lies the tale. A precocious and ambitious son of a liberal Democratic New York judge, Mr. Cohn raced through high school in three years and, in another three and a half, managed to earn both his bachelor's and law degrees from Columbia University. At twenty-one, the legal minimum, he was a full-fledged lawyer and Assistant U.S. Attorney. He prosecuted over two hundred criminal cases involving narcotics and counterfeiting. At a tender twenty-three he was

Mr. Scott is a frequent contributor to the Chronicles.

the prosecutor in the Julius and Ethel Rosenberg trials. At twenty-five he was the confidential assistant to the Attorney General of the United States. A year later he was chief counsel to the Subcommittee on Permanent Investigations chaired by Senator Joe McCarthy. And it was at this point in his career that Roy M. Cohn was savaged in unforgettable fashion, which turned him into a historical figure—and a fighter par excellence.

"That's Roy. Arrogant. Aggressive. A promoter. Anything but accountable."

—*New York Times Book Review*

It would be tempting at this point to digress into a comparable portrait of Robert F. Kennedy, another young man who served the McCarthy Committee as Assistant Counsel. But the role of the Kennedys—father Joseph and sons Robert and John—in connection with McCarthy is so replete with double-dealing and slipperiness that the heart sinks at the thought. It is too intricate for a readable summary and too revealing of a family whose brilliance was leavened by unscrupulousness to be

in alliterative nonsense and appended footnotes in evident pride of his own wit. Time and again Mr. Cohn cites cases of malice that were denied by lower or upper courts, verdicts whose awards were shaved or others whose claims were too modest.

Lawyers are aware, of course, of all these difficulties. Mr. Cohn cites the Chief Justice of the United States, who opined that half of all practicing lawyers are incompetent. Since there are over 258,000 lawyers in the land, that would

The Dartmouth Review

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- Patrick Buchanan on Dartmouth
- Dartmouth Brings Back ROTC?
- Steve Kroll on Pledge Raids
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The Dartmouth Review was founded a year ago to combat the decadent liberalism that, in the sixties, took over the educational establishment.

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mean that 129,000 are charging their clients for what amounts to injuring their cases. Mr. Cohn believes that the number of incompetents is even higher than half of all the lawyers in practice. Being a top-notch lawyer himself, Mr. Cohn refuses to use fuzzy examples or to water his arguments by making sweeping societal observations. His view of human nature, as befits a courtroom lawyer, is that people under pressure do not behave in the reasonable and ethical manner they assume in idle conversation. The sway of self-interest and the rise of emotion strip most legal situations of niceties. In effect, what Mr. Cohn says is that our society has become a legal jungle where every citizen must walk not only with care, but with his fists ready to fight. A more terrible indictment of the system created by our millions of laws

and hundreds of thousands of lawyers would be difficult to find.

Not once in this fairly long volume does Mr. Cohn attempt to draw conclusions for the reader, but those who are aware of his anticommunist activities and subsequent legal difficulties will read his work with mental bifocals. One should not forget that Roy M. Cohn is an individual whom powerful politicians sought to destroy. That they did not succeed is due not to any surge of outside support, but to his own raw courage, determination and wit. Therefore one can rely on his advice to stand up and fight; it comes from one who did. In a larger sense, no matter how grim he may outwardly appear, I am convinced that Mr. Cohn's life has been the sweeter for having followed his own advice—and for having won. □

Boring Adolescence of Untalented Writers

Joel Agee: *Twelve Years: An American Boyhood in East Germany*; Farrar, Straus & Giroux; New York.

Anthony Bailey: *America Lost and Found*; Random House; New York.

by Richard Vigilante

A friend of mine, not an American, once asked me if he should read Hemingway in English, or would he find it disillusioning, having already read the corpus in his mother tongue. (My friend was fresh from a great disappointment. In his homeland he had treasured a translation of *Oliver Twist*. He thought it read like Kafka, only better, and he had been looking forward to reading Dickens in English. He started with *Oliver Twist* again. He was crushed. It read, of course, like Dickens.) He ex-

Mr. Vigilante writes his essays in Alexandria, Virginia.

plained that the principal attraction of Hemingway, at least in translation, is that the books have a tremendously appetizing quality, and he would be very sad to find that that delightful effect was lost in the original.

Fortunately it is not. Not only are Hemingway's better books like a relish for all sorts of vital experiences, my friend's observation is also true in the simplest sense. Reading Hemingway makes one hungry—for the very simple reason that he frequently shows us the pleasure that his (justifiably hungry) characters get from eating. It is one of the principal pleasures of his books. I will go further. It is one of the principal virtues of those books. In a very real sense all that is good about those books, all their "meaning," can be derived from the pleasure with which his characters eat. If the editors of this country's major publishing houses could, for the next 15 years, discipline the writers on their lists by requiring that all the sex

scenes in their books be replaced by scenes of equal length in which the characters eat, they would be able to save American literature from its present limpness.

I don't make this suggestion out of prudery. I make the suggestion because the modern clinical sex scene is a crutch for the worst tendency in modern high-culture writing: the mindless recording of rather banal, mediocre and quite unexceptional experiences without any attempt to give them meaning or derive meaning from them.

Literary traditionalists often complain that contemporary high-culture novels are boring because they lack plot. Nonsense. *The Idiot* has less plot development per page than the majority of contemporary novels. Books are boring when they lack meaning. After all, we are having experiences all the time. We turn to the writer to *condense* that experience for us and *expose* it in a meaningful way. But many contemporary writers seem to think that writing is simply a matter of listing experiences and events. (These are held to be especially interesting if they are the author's very own experiences.) If the reader will allow me the immodesty of offering an explanation, these people write this way because they live in a culture which glorifies observations of fact but shuns judgments of value. Such a stance encourages both observation and wild speculation. But it discourages thought. Liberal culture is committed to the idea that the way to understand the world is to list all the facts. This is not only very inefficient, it is also painfully boring.

I wish that the defenders of "values" in literature would give up the self-righteous "defenders of the innocents" approach. Value judgments are important to literature because they make it interesting, because it is only through such judgments that the writer can comprehend the world.

But enough of this levity. Let's get back to serious subjects. Why replace sex with food? Because the sex scene

is a perfect blind behind which a writer who doesn't understand his characters or the world, and therefore has nothing of interest to reveal about them, can hide. Because sex is an expression of the inner passions of the soul a character's sex acts are assumed to be significant in themselves—to reveal something important about the character. Actually, in the hands of our mindless author sex is just another event, another fact that he doesn't understand. But perhaps the reader won't notice.

You can't do that with food. The pleasure of sex is—as often as it is not—that of the fulfillment of a desire. If it is not endowed with any special sense, or symbolism, it is a rather simple event. As Borges has said, "At the climactic moment of copulation, all men are the same man." Eating has much more potential for genuine appreciative pleasure. The pleasures involved are of a naturally more varied type. There is far more diversity in cuisines than in meaningless sex. The writer must understand enough about human nature to understand what gives pleasure in various circumstances, moods and settings if he is to write a good eating scene. A good eating scene requires that you have something to say about your characters and the world. And these scenes would, under our simple reform, have to be good. It is much easier to tell a bad eating scene from a good one than to tell a bad sex scene from a good one, because all sex scenes, especially adolescent coming-of-age sex scenes, are alike. Writers with nothing to say won't be able to hide behind bad sex scenes anymore. They will either develop an interesting perspective or they will have to finish law school.

The unbearably boring books that are the subject of this article are prime examples of the problem we have been discussing. Both are memoirs of youth. (Joel Agee's book recounts his adolescence in postwar East Germany, to which his mother and stepfather, both communists, emigrated in 1948, and

Bailey was one of several thousand English children who were sent to America to avoid World War II.) Both show such a lack of capacity to extract any meaning, or at least amusement, from the author's experiences that I cannot guess how the authors decided what to include and what to leave out. Fortunately I don't have to guess. Both writers more or less tell us that they wrote down everything they could remember.

Anthony Bailey is a regular at *The New Yorker*. His is—literally—the memoir of a seven-year-old. Imagine 152 pages of "The Talk of the Town" restricted to the doings of a seven-year-old who is tediously fascinated by the slightest difference in manners between the country he writes about and his own, and who, furthermore, doesn't really remember things very well.

Joel Agee, the son of James Agee, is fiction editor of *Harper's*. His book seems to be more interesting because it is a little better written, it wastes more interesting material and its faults are more typical, thus more informative. It illustrates some of the main problems with the sort of random writing we have been discussing. Agee is a great practitioner of what may be called significance by association. This is the attempt to charge one's book with import by mentioning certain well-known events that the author may not understand or about which he may have nothing original to

So he didn't notice what effect the knowledge of the Holocaust had on people at the time, and he has nothing of interest to say about it now. At one point he records his reaction to a photograph showing a particularly cruel nazi "medical experiment." Agee's insight: "The enormity of it. The wrongness, unfathomable."

The narrative thread holding together the story of Joel's personal development is, predictably, his sexual maturation. Nothing ingenious here either—neither in detail, frustration nor failure. This sort of thing is especially tedious because sensitive would-be writer types tend to be shy and drag things out for quite a while. Sometimes one wishes that a few healthy jocks who had definitively established their sexual inclinations by the time they were 14 would take over the job of writing the stories of adolescence. This would make today's liberal high-brow literature a bit more lively.

This unoriginal choice of narrative device is especially irritating in Agee's case. I find it conceivable that the life of the average middle-class American adolescent is now so dull that this tired set of experiences, known to all adolescents, is the most interesting story he would have to tell. But Agee, with his potentially fascinating background, has no such excuse. Yet in the entire book there was not one moment of thoughtful reflection on the effect the special cir-

"[*Twelve Years* is a] wonderfully evocative memoir . . ."

—*New York Times*

"[*Twelve Years* is] poetic and picturesque . . ."

—*Time*

say, but which are universally recognized as significant. The Holocaust is a good subject for this method, and since Agee was conveniently located in East Germany he touches that base several times. In fairness to him, it *should* be important to his story. But at the time he lived in East Germany he was an annoying, self-centered adolescent who was not very interested in the people around him.

cumstances of Agee's upbringing had on him.

Agee describes his relationship with his younger brother in a way that is reminiscent of a passage in Thomas Merton's memoir, *The Seven Storey Mountain*. I check Merton and the two passages do invite some comparison. I quote them here because the difference between the

two clearly illustrates what is missing in Agee and writers like him. Agee:

It is painful for me to write about Stefan's very sad childhood in any detail because I contributed to it, both actively and by default, out of jealousy and out of a need to dominate. I excluded him from my games with my friends, insisting that he was too young for us, and at other times, when I did condescend to play with him it was with a kind of pushy superiority—natural perhaps, in brothers six years apart in age, but still a source of shame and self-reproach when I think back on it. There were times when my jealousy materialized as physical disgust—the pale freckles covering his face, his habit of saving his desserts and sweets revolted me. Nor could I forgive him the only weapon he had against me which was to tell on me. It infuriated me that his complaints were always believed and always dignified with the most serious attention (in large part owing to the fact that he told the truth), while on several occasions mine were dismissed as lies or exaggerations (which they often were). The immediate facts had little bearing on my feelings. I felt victimized by his existence.

Merton:

One thing I would say about my brother John Paul. My most vivid memories of him, in our childhood, all fill me with poignant compunction at the thought of my own pride and hard heartedness, and at his natural humility and love . . . When I think now of that part of my childhood, the picture I get of my brother John Paul is this: standing in a field, about a hundred yards away from the clump of sumachs where we have built our hut, is this little perplexed five-year-old kid in short pants and a kind of a leather jacket, standing quite still, with his arms hanging down at his sides, and gazing in our direction, afraid to come any nearer on account of the stones, as insulted as he is saddened, and his eyes full of indignation and sorrow. And yet he does not go away. We shout at him to get out of there, to beat it, and go home, and wing a couple of more rocks

in that direction, and he does not go away. We tell him to play in some other place. He does not move.

And there he stands, not sobbing, not crying, but angry and unhappy and offended and tremendously sad. And yet he is fascinated by what we are doing, nailing shingles all over our new hut. And his tremendous desire to be with us and do what we are doing will not permit him to go away. The law written in his nature says that he must be with his elder brother, and do what he is doing: and he cannot understand why this law of love is being so wildly and unjustly violated in his case.

I am *not* making a moral point. Merton's passage is about his values, which give him a heightened understanding. Agee's passage starts out on a note of sympathetic understanding for his brother but constantly reverts to "I," to the effect the memory has on himself. The point is not that Agee is selfish but that he has a narrow view. He is thus of little use to his reader. Merton, on the other hand, starts with his own feelings. But his capacity for sympathetic understanding penetrates first the heart of his brother and then pierces the hearts of all his readers. So why read Agee? □

In the forthcoming issue of *Chronicles of Culture*:

The Myth of the Sexual Revolution

Sexual Revolution is a pathetic misnomer. The most popular aspect of any revolution is the reversal of roles: aristocrats go to the scaffold, judged by the wretched of the earth. The needy are told that all their needs will be fulfilled; the greedy have all their material luxuries withdrawn—at least temporarily. In light of this simple recipe, nothing short of a mass impregnation of men by women would be enough of a sexual turnaround to justify the term revolution.

from the Editor's Comment

Rightist affiliations are often ruinous to scholars at prestige universities, while association with explicitly leftist causes and journals continues to bring professional advancement. While these trends may be difficult to reverse, there can be no excuse for our treating political posturing as serious scholarship.

from "Historians' Erotic Intensity"
by Paul Gottfried

Also:

Opinions & Views—Commendables—In Focus
Waste of Money—Perceptibles—The American
Proscenium—Stage—Screen—Art—Music
Correspondence—Liberal Culture—Journalism
Social Register

help for the working class.
The factors that turn Mexico against the
Salvadoran government are not economic,

Notable & Quotable

Paul Gottfried, a senior editor of the conservative intellectual quarterly *Modern Age*, in an exchange on the role of the Moral Majority in the conservative revival, printed in *Chronicles of Culture*, a publication of the Rockford Institute, Rockford, Ill.:

That conservative men of letters have not been the ones to kindle the moral fire which is currently displacing liberal permissiveness should sober rather than irritate us. Things are changing because of the private grievances, wounded pride and personal hopes of countless millions. . . .

Not well-honed logic but broken dreams, human frustration and challenged social instincts are producing the present widespread passion for old truths. Intellectuals may assist the movement which this passion has engendered, but they have no real power to control it. At most they can advise or admonish the spokesmen for a moral force that has become culturally ineffective without them.

I personally have no quarrel with this state of affairs. The Moral Majoritarians have made cultural inroads in spite of the revulsion of America's intellectual establishment. Their New Right allies continue to win elections in the teeth of venomous academic and journalistic opposition. . . . I would like Heaven and more: in this case, conservative victories being won by witty, elegant men bearing a stylistic affinity to, say, Metternich or Disraeli. But I won't hold my breath until this happens.

From the editorial page of
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
January 27, 1982

Chronicles of Culture

The above clipping was excerpted from the November/December 1981 issue of *Chronicles of Culture*. For back copies of "M.M. and the Conservative Ethos of Refinement" or Associate Editor James J. Thompson's essay on the Moral Majority, send \$1.50 apiece (postage included) to *Chronicles of Culture*, 934 N. Main St., Rockford, IL 61103.

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The Frolics of Psyche & Intellect

Guy Davenport: *Eclogues*; North Point Press; San Francisco.

Guy Davenport: *The Geography of the Imagination*; North Point Press; San Francisco.

by Maura Daly

Some critics have called Guy Davenport the last of the Modernists—grouping him with the most illustrious writers of our century (Joyce, Eliot and Pound among others). Davenport's recent publication, *The Geography of the Imagination*, a delightful series of refined, scholarly essays which are simultaneously eclectic, erudite and esoteric, would lend credence to such a view. Despite his startling erudition—his subjects range from the significance of the epsilon on the omphalos (the navel stone) of the Delphic Oracle to the fictional craft of Eudora Welty—Davenport's prose retains an impish sprightliness. Nowhere is this playfulness more evident than in his essay on "The Anthropology of Table Manners" in which he describes the ineluctable evolution of an untutored teen-ager toward civility *a table*.

Even the most oafish teen-ager who mainly eats from the refrigerator at home . . . will eventually find himself at a table where he is under the eye of his father-in-law to be, or his coach, and will make the effort to wolf his roll in two bites rather than one, and even to leave some for the next person when he is passed a bowl of potatoes. He will, naturally, still charge his whole plate with six glops of catsup, knock over his water, and eat his cake from the palm of his hand; but a wife, the country club, and the Rotarians will get him, and before he's twenty-five he'll be eating fruit salad with extended pinky, tap-

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ping his lips with the napkin before sipping his Sauterne Almaden, and talking woks and fondues with the boys at the office.

Davenport's wit does not prevent his collection of essays from being indisputably a work of serious scholarship which perhaps will initiate a renaissance of the essay—not the discrete, highly stylized essays like those of Montaigne, but rather highly intuitive and synthetic elucidations which discount the prosaic and reveal hidden, ephemeral, transcendent correspondences between different civilizations, technologies and millennia. Davenport clearly states his goal: "We need a geography of the imagination to understand the appearance and significance of cultural vernaculars beyond their origins." Davenport seems to be seeking a way of reunifying the atomized arts and sciences of the 20th century.

Although he has definite success with this undertaking in *The Geography of the Imagination*, the same claim cannot be made for his other recent publication—an anthology of eight short stories entitled *Eclogues*, after Virgil's pastoral poems. In these stories, some of the very same qualities which make Davenport's essays astounding—the use

of several foreign languages, the culling of diverse cultural and historical errata and a highly personalized style—here become obscurantist and divisive. With the exception of perhaps the first story, entitled "The Trees at Lystra," in which there is a crystalline purity of prose, Davenport's stories seem to be atomized fragments of solipsistic thought.

Rather than producing a feeling of plenitude or unity, the many cultural references convey the impression that life itself is nothing but an imitation of art rather than the reverse. In addition, Davenport layers words upon words to such an extent that, by virtue of their accumulation, they cease to signify. (The reader is reminded of the comment of the parrot in Raymond Quenau's *Zazie dans le métro*: "You chatter, you chatter, that's all you know how to do.") This would be fine if Davenport were writing a second *Bouvard et Pécuchet* and his avowed literary purpose were parodic, satiric or implosive prose. Such, however, is not the case, and the many disassociated references coupled with the vast vocabulary seem to be an attempt to fill a basic emptiness and aimlessness in the stories themselves. Two additional elements which contribute to the artificial and static character of these stories are Daven-

LIBERAL CULTURE

Love

In a mere one sentence in the *New York Times Book Review* of November 29, 1981, Mr. Anatole Broyard dispels one of the great mysteries enshrouding the subject of love:

It's only natural for innovations in love to appear first in fiction, for that's where most of us get our ideas about it.

We feel taken aback. We would advise Mr. Broyard to speak in his own name. □



port's proclivity for changing verbs into nouns and his obsessive preoccupation with homosexuality. Neither the repeated allusions to genitalia and their respective sizes and uses, nor the plethora of terms which Davenport finds to describe them, particularly in "On Some Lines of Virgil," seem to have any particular relevance to the stories in which they appear. In fact, most of the sexual relations which Davenport depicts in his anthology are gratuitous. The engrossment with onanism in *Eclogues* seems to reveal an artistic obsession with creativity and a concomitant avowal of sterility as somehow equal components of an ego.

Davenport, however, sees his treatment of sexuality in a different light. His comments regarding "The Dawn of Erewhon," a story predating those in *Eclogues*, are instructive in this regard:

The human body in this story is a counter-symbol to the machine . . . I felt free to be as explicit as I could, for we have so misunderstood the animality of our bodies that we may deserve, as I have an Erewhonian Villiers de l'Isle Adam say, to have machines do our living for us.

I would agree with Davenport that he restores the animality of his characters to them, but in the process he inadvertently deprives them of much of their humanity. The repeated exploitation of sexuality throughout *Eclogues* transforms several of the characters into mindlessly churning machines in search of continual sexual gratification. Their condition brings to mind Camus's withering definition of 20th-century man: "He fornicated and read newspapers."

Another element which adds to the artificiality of the stories in *Eclogues* is Davenport's highly stylized manner of writing. Discussing the confrontation of the self in imaginative writing in his essay, "Ernst Machs Max Ernst," Davenport admits: "Though I admire styles in which words are deployed in a practical economy . . . my heart is with

styles controlled by artifice." Unfortunately, for artifice to work effectively in literature, it first must become real or be perceived as such. In Davenport's anthology this transformation fails to take place.

Davenport's fiction reflects in many ways the century to which it belongs. The stories are eclectic—filled with numerous languages, distant countries, far-off times—they are informative, filled with newspaperlike snippets about the caves at Lascaux, paintings by Picasso or Van Gogh and musings on the life of Socrates. The fragmented writing in several of Davenport's stories mirrors, to some extent, the atomization of the 20th-century psyche which has successively witnessed the destruction of social, cultural and religious values—to say nothing of the psychoanalytical dissection of the psyche itself. The telegraphic style of these fragments evokes a certain nostalgia stemming from the inverse and paradoxical proportion between how much we know and how little we understand.

Gay as a Depressing Adjective

John Boswell: *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century*; The University of Chicago Press; Chicago.

by Father Richard R. Roach, S.J.

John Boswell has written a history ostensibly about the tolerance of homosexuals (whom he prefers to call "gay people") from the dawn of the Christian era until the 14th century. His treatment of the subject is muddled by a

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Whereas Davenport does a brilliant job in bringing together disparate philosophies, cultures and millennia in his book of essays, these elements remain disunified in his anthology. The disappointment that the reader experiences is all the more frustrating because of Davenport's obvious erudition, creativity and talent with words. Moreover, he theoretically aspires to a plenitude of meaning that is only found in the greatest works of literature:

Far from wanting a word to be invisible, unassertive, the makeshift vehicle for something else ("idea," "thought"), I want every word to be wholly, thoroughly a word. If reality can be pictured in words, words must be seen as a set of essences in parallel series to the world.

If, indeed, Davenport is eventually able to attain this goal in his fiction, his stories will felicitously rival in depth, breadth, meaning and coherence his magnificent essays and he will be well on his way to charting a new path in the geography of our collective imagination. □

number of profound confusions. Apart from his handling of the question of tolerance, one wonders if his real interest did not lie elsewhere, namely in advocating a radical change in Christian morality. The implied thesis of the book seems to be that Christian morality and homosexual practice are not necessarily incompatible. In his own words, which have a studied modesty, we read:

If, on the other hand, one concludes that the antierotic feelings and doctrines of the most extreme of the fathers were an excess rather than a base point of Christian ethics and that Christian orthodoxy has not necessarily consisted of rigid adherence to a completely functional approach,

then one must also abandon the doctrinaire conclusion that acceptance of homosexuality represents a decline in Christian morality simply because it departs from such a position. One must begin to examine whether toleration of gay sexuality in fact accompanies moral decadence within the Christian community and is associated with the abandonment of Christian ethics in general, or whether it is simply part of a softening of an extreme functionalism in Christian sexual ethics, perhaps within a context of conscientious Christian reform.

The choice of the term "gay" embodies at least one of the confusions affecting this history. As Mr. Boswell and others use it, it is designed to blur, or even eliminate, the distinction between feelings and actions so that a man may be counted as "gay" even if he has never performed a homosexual act. As a result of this confusion, Boswell's plea for "the toleration of gay sexuality" implies not merely that we show understanding and compassion towards certain people subject to certain feelings, but that Christian morality be so changed that Christians will be taught to acknowledge that it is all right for some people to engage in, for instance, sodomy rather than regard it as always and everywhere sinful. Consequently, Boswell's history strives to make plausible the claim that at different times enlightened Christians did just that, i.e. thought that sodomy was at least tolerable for some people sometimes. Of course he never actually proves this, as even favorable reviewers recognize. But, given the current widespread ignorance about Catholic morality (including an unfortunately large number of clergy), Mr. Boswell will probably succeed in giving the impression that he has proven his point.

If I have shifted from the term "Christian ethics" to "Catholic morality," I have done so both to make a necessary distinction and to introduce the perspective from which I intend to comment on Mr. Boswell's work. Since the days of

the German Enlightenment there have been increasingly large numbers of people who want to designate themselves as "Christian" in some sense, but who set aside many of the beliefs and practices essential to the Christian faith. An example may be found in the abortion movement. Nothing could be clearer from an historical point of view than perdurable Christian opposition to abortion and infanticide. Yet in our day there are many who want to call themselves Christians but do not regard abortion as a sin. Often they seek to have it tolerated legally and encouraged by the government's social policies. Before the widespread confusion about faith and morals which characterizes our century, no one in his right mind could have linked anything that could be designated "Christian" with a favorable attitude towards abortion. But it is done all the time today, and, unfortunately, the term "Christian ethics" is sometimes used in such contexts. That being the case, I must turn to "Catholic morality" to name what I believe most people who called themselves "Christian" during the period Mr. Boswell treats would have recognized as the moral teaching of their faith. It is still the moral teaching of the Catholic Church.

One foundation of this morality is what Mr. Boswell indicated in the quotation above with the term "functional approach." This in turn is linked to his discussion of what has been known in the West as Natural Law. His attack on "Natural Law" morality begins early, and one might say it is the leitmotif of the book. Soon that morality is definitively dismissed: "The scientific, philosophical, and even moral considerations which underlay this approach have since been almost wholly discredited and are consciously rejected by most educated persons . . ." Behind this sentence lies Mr. Boswell's failure to understand the "Natural Law" and the use the Catholic Church has made of it through the centuries; his footnotes, which as one reviewer put it "climb half-way up the

page," will mask this ignorance only from those who share it. ("Natural Law" is in quotes because, although this is the most common term in recent centuries, the reality has been treated using other words. C. S. Lewis demonstrated this when he wrote *The Abolition of Man* and called the "Natural Law" the TAO.) Alasdair MacIntyre, an authority on the history of ethics, has just published a book analyzing why the ignorance which Boswell exhibits is so widespread. MacIntyre says: "We possess indeed simulacra of morality, we continue to use many of the key expressions but we have—very largely, if not entirely—lost our comprehension, both theoretical and practical, of morality." (*After Virtue*, University of Notre Dame, 1981) MacIntyre explains that this is due to the loss of a functional concept of man. A functional concept of "man" stands to 'good man' as 'watch' stands to 'good watch' or 'farmer' to 'good farmer.' So, just as I can say that this is a bad watch because it does not function as a watch ought to function (e.g. it does not tell time), I can say, this is a bad man because he does not function as a man ought to function (e.g. he lies, he steals, he engages in sodomy).

Mr. Boswell thinks that the functional concept of man has to do with his nature, that it can be understood as one might understand a merely biological description. He then tries to distinguish between those whose grasp of this "nature" is, in his opinion, realistic and those whose understanding is idealistic. The whole discussion is misplaced because Mr. Boswell seems not to understand the classical use of the term. (MacIntyre uses the term "function" to refer to the classical understanding; Boswell uses it to refer to something quite different.) The misunderstanding leads to, among other things, a discussion of homosexuality in brute animals and reaches a moment of high humor with an unwitting self-parody. Even after he has shown that some brute animals are homosexual, Boswell says: "If man

were the only species to demonstrate homosexual desires and behavior, this would hardly be grounds for categorizing them as 'unnatural.' Most of the behavior which human societies most admire is unique to humans: this is indeed the main reason it is respected. No one imagines that human society 'naturally' resists literacy because it is unknown among other animals."*

Without an accurate understanding of Catholic morality, Mr. Boswell's book is what a history of science would be if written by a man who knew nothing of scientific experiments. No matter how many learned treatises he read in no matter how many languages, he could not write an accurate history.

If that were all there were to it, the book would not be too disturbing, but, along with its other defects, it creates a false impression about the character of men living in the communion of saints. If you recall the Apostles' Creed, you will recall the words: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, . . ." Those of us who believe that these words are true feel something special

*If any reader of this review would like to avoid the ignorance in which Boswell is mired, in addition to MacIntyre's book I would recommend *Natural Law and Natural Rights* by John Finnis (Oxford University Press, 1980) and *The Virtues* by Peter T. Geach (Cambridge University Press, 1977).

about known saints, and Mr. Boswell has slurred the character of some saints. Regardless of how skeptically the subject may be approached, it is difficult to imagine that St. Anselm, St. Paulinus of Nola, St. Aelred or Saints Felicity and Perpetua believed that homosexual acts were anything other than sins, and, with the exception of St. Aelred, I do not believe that Mr. Boswell's evidence proves that these people were "gay." Saint Aelred may differ from the others in that there may be evidence that he sinned homosexually in his youth, but I would never draw that conclusion solely from Mr. Boswell's presentation. For even in this case Boswell's misunderstanding of Catholic morality is clear in, for example, his handling of a key passage from St. Aelred's writings. He seems not to realize that a reference to "spiritual marriage" or "spiritual friendship" in a Catholic context absolutely excludes the physical and instead implies consecrated virginity. In general, Mr. Boswell seems not to grasp the Christian use of familial and erotic metaphors. He seems not to understand that a good, mature Christian adult male could refer to himself as a spiritual child or as a mere boy in the spiritual life, or that he could speak of someone as his spiritual father, and so forth. *A fortiori* Boswell does not understand how a pure soul of either sex could refer to his spiritual union with Our Lord as a marriage. This ignorance permits him to see St. Aelred's appeal to the example of Our Lord

and His beloved disciple in an ambiguous light.

Mr. Boswell's insinuation that these saints were "gay" follows inevitably from his use of that term which embodies the confusion we mentioned before. It prevents him from seeing that he must distinguish between feelings and actions. Instead, he says approvingly "most speakers use 'gay' to describe persons who are conscious of erotic preference for their own gender." But Catholic morality has only secondary interest in persons' consciousness "of erotic preference for their own gender." What that morality is concerned with is whether persons commit the sin of sodomy or the like. The "consciousness" Mr. Boswell uses as the definiens for the misleading term "gay" is of concern to Catholic morality only insofar as it may become a temptation, either to immoral sexual acts or to a false humility expressed in discouragement and neurotic self-depreciation, even despair. What is forbidden is sodomy (as is traditional, I use the term to stand for all perverted sexual acts). Even in laudatory reviews such as those found in the *New York Review of Books* and *Speculum*, the reviewers each name some of the saints I have mentioned and express doubt that Mr. Boswell has shown that they engaged in sodomy or thought it was right to do so.

In fact, if Mr. Boswell had any understanding of the virtue of chastity, he would see that in cultures where men simply assume respect for this virtue they are free to express love—between persons of the same sex, love for God, even God's love for us—in erotic terms. Since he knows nothing of this, his misunderstandings become little short of astonishing. We shall look at the account of David and Jonathan in order to make this point even clearer. There is a sick pattern of thought found most frequently in practicing sodomites and, in our day, often among those who are victims of what Rieff called the triumph of the therapeutic. People express this affliction by finding some form of "sex-



ual" implication, preferably illicit, where those of sound mind know it is not. G. K. Chesterton encountered this on an afternoon outing with someone who saw a phallic symbol in church steeples. I recall being taught by some woebegone psychologist that when athletes slap each other on the butt they are expressing their homosexuality. Victims of such thought patterns have a favorite story in the Bible, the history of David and Jonathan. Of course this story very much occupies Mr. Boswell's mind, and it is most instructive how he uses it. Predictably, he sees the story as "the biblical counterpart of the pagan Ganymede as a symbol for passionate attachment between persons of the same gender"; he then uses this theme to comment on the writings of St. Aelred and Abelard. A couple of sentences capture the methodology of his book perfectly.

Apropos of King Edward II of England, he writes: "The most restrained of all his biographers noted that Edward's love of Gaveston, like David's for Jonathan, went 'beyond love of women.' *The Chronicle of Melsa* tersely observed that 'Edward in fact delighted inordinately in the vice of sodomy and seemed to lack fortune and grace throughout his life.' " Note first that "the most restrained of all his biographers" who likens Edward to David, according to Mr. Boswell's footnotes, is not the author of *The Chronicle* in which Edward is said to have engaged in sodomy, so we do not know whether the "restrained biographer" indulged in the same mistaken insinuation of which Mr. Boswell is so fond and which he is making in this sentence we have just quoted.

It would be helpful if the reader of this review would now reread the history of King David in the Bible. There, in David's funeral lament over the dead Saul and Jonathan, we read:

O Jonathan, in your death I am stricken,
I am desolate for you, Jonathan,
my brother.

Very dear to me you were,

your love to me more wonderful
than the love of a woman.
(II Samuel 1:26. Jerusalem Bible)

Earlier on we read that: "After David finished talking to Saul, Jonathan's soul became closely bound to David's and Jonathan came to love him as his own soul." (I Samuel 18:1)

Were either David or Jonathan "gay"? Is not the important question the one that gets at the real distinction between temptation and sin? This underlying sophistry of Mr. Boswell's work is indeed of an easy sort: biblical "love" naturally identifies friendship, and friendship between men *can* be "more wonderful than the love of a woman." Does



it really affect the quality, the moral character, of the friendship between David and Jonathan if one or both for a short time, or for a long time, or for their whole lives were "conscious of erotic preference for their own gender"? I firmly believe it does not. I also believe that if they had chosen to be sodomites their friendship would have

been qualitatively other than what it was. Only a person who can both make and sustain the distinction I have drawn *and* sees its significance could possibly write a history of homosexuality in an avowedly Christian milieu, because Christians, even more than their predecessors before the birth of Christ, value the virtue of chastity. (Since ignorance of Christian virtues is so widespread today, it must be noted that the virtue of chastity does not imply a rejection of sex. It is, rather, the virtue that protects both the family and our purity of heart, which is required if we are to see God, as the Sermon on the Mount instructs us. The virtue of chastity requires self-discipline, limiting sexual acts to only those which qualify as conjugal acts proper between husband and wife. For me the virtue requires complete abstinence; for a married man it requires fidelity to and a loving respect for his wife.) In my judgment David and Jonathan respected this virtue (although David notoriously sinned against it with Bathsheba), and the quality of their friendship or love was that of two men who do not engage in sex with each other. Such a friendship is altogether different from the relationship between two sodomites. I wish Mr. Boswell had discovered this truth before starting to write.

To treat properly the question of tolerance, a number of typically Christian distinctions must be made, such as that between loving the sinner and hating the sin. Furthermore, Mr. Boswell's denial that socially tolerated homosexuality took the form of pederasty in ancient Greece and Rome leads him to overlook what I think is one principal reason why Christian societies have sought to restrain the public display of homosexual practice. Anyone with pastoral experience knows what even today's society will eventually have to admit—that sodomites prey on boys. When that is finally acknowledged, I suspect there will be an outcry against some cultural patterns which encourage homosexuality in our society. Then the Christian past will be better understood.

Mr. Boswell's errors and muddled thinking about Catholic morality lead him to list various "condemnations" without making essential distinctions. For example, we read: "Lending at interest, sexual intercourse during the menstrual period, jewelry or dyed fabrics, shaving, regular bathing, wearing wigs, serving in the civil government or army, performing manual labor on feast days, eating kosher food, practicing circumcision—all were condemned absolutely by various fathers of the church..." Sorting out his chaos of notions would

need another article. The first step would be to clarify the distinction between a *Church* law (requiring abstinence from meat on Fridays and other days) and a *moral* law (prohibiting, for example, adultery or sodomy). Mr. Boswell seems to know nothing of these differences. His treatment of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas would require a separate article too, but I am afraid it would interest specialists rather than general readers. Suffice it to say that these were great men and Mr. Boswell just does not understand them. □

modern tendency to shun responsibility and to structure one's life by only reacting against authority instead of by assuming it. Since the characters in *Baby* either will not or cannot assume responsibility for their own lives, they are doomed to a perpetual prepubescent world in which they acknowledge only physical needs and try futilely to gratify them. Their obsessive preoccupation with food may indicate not only their arrested development, but also their insatiable hunger for some other, more symbolic, nourishment. Still more revealing is the pathetic parade of objects that they buy in their frenetic attempts to assuage their psychic starvation and to fill the space around them—even if they cannot fill the aching emptiness within themselves: acrylic blouses, ceramic vases, imitation-leopard clothes, candy bars, coke, corn flakes, vampire comic books, beds made of beer cans, and Norwegian pornographic magazines.

The things that the characters eat, buy and do in *Baby* assure that they will never grow up—assure, in fact, that they will die of spiritual malnutrition, that they will try to palliate their hunger for love with a diet of the sedatives that keep some of them in the perpetual, dazed twilight of the habitually drugged. The real hunger that afflicts them is the desire to love and to be loved. Nora, a teen-age prostitute, says, "I just want to fall in love—I'd like that," but Thorup seems to know that it is difficult for someone who has never been loved to love; she describes Nora with "a distant look on her face and her mouth was open and she stared out at the road without blinking and she was a lost soul, like someone who had never been loved."

The same problem plagues the three major characters in *World Without End*—even though they are richer, better educated, more well-traveled, articulate, intelligent, self-conscious and complicated than any of the characters in *Baby*. Edmund, a Russian-Jewish-American art historian; Sophie, an internationally known television newswoman; and

Eternal Infancy

Kristen Thorup: *Baby*; Louisiana State University Press; Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Francine du Plessix Gray: *World Without End*; Simon & Schuster; New York.

by Carson Daly

One of the most distressing aspects of much popular modern literature is its tendency not only to chronicle but also to glorify the immature, the perverted, the obscene and the ignoble. In many contemporary works one rarely encounters the normal or the mature—much less the whole, the pure and the brave. Instead, one is often condemned to keep vicarious company with the spiritually blind, the emotionally halt and the psychically lame whom the reader is explicitly asked to admire and implicitly pressured to emulate. In this respect, the reading and writing of much current literature is an infectious activity in which the reader first contracts and then spreads the puerile indecisiveness and moral ennui that affects so many modern protagonists.

Two recent books which differ widely

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in style, setting, plot and characterization, offer the reader a good, hard, long look at what kinds of lives, attitudes and malaises modern literature considers worth recording. Despite the very great differences between the Danish author Kristen Thorup's recently translated *Baby* and the American Francine du Plessix Gray's *World Without End*, both demonstrate that the modern interest is not, as the titles of these books might suggest, in either the infant or eternity but in eternal infancy—the never-never land where maturity forever hovers on the horizon, a seductive but ultimately rejected alternative.

Although Thorup's novel *Baby* describes no actual infants, no expectant parents, no maternity wards, it abounds in a whole cast of aimless, infantile characters who never have, and never will, grow up. They wallow in their emotional and spiritual arrested development—equally cut off from innocence and maturity.

As the novel progresses, the characters regress. Of scant interest in themselves, these regressions act as paradigms for modern aimlessness and infantilism in general, for the sense of alienation which more or less truly afflicts so many modern men, for the empty sensuality from which so many contemporary women suffer, for the

Claire, a Wasp crusader for the rights of man, are all suffering from what threatens to be a terminal inability to grow up and a concomitant incapacity to love. But Sophie does not seem to speak for herself alone when she says "Have I been in love? That's been the disaster of my life." Indeed, she seems to speak for a whole chorus of modern tragedians enacting loveless dramas at all stages of contemporary life.

Sophie, Claire and Edmund, however, seem a trifle more advanced than the characters in *Baby* and their many non-

and love which he really seeks on his path to self-discovery. The substitutes all prove ultimately deceptive. Sophie discovers that her role as the daughter of a New York talent magnate, her attempt to be the muse and amanuensis of a great artist, her position as the wife of a canned-food tycoon, her liaison with a famous hippie actor, her marriage to an Israeli and finally her brilliantly successful career as a newswoman leave her lonely, disillusioned and afraid. Her recurring nightmare speaks for a whole generation of today's career women: "I have

Sophie and Claire. It soon becomes obvious that his feelings for the former are mostly a form of self-gratulatory affection and his passion for the latter is mostly a desire for the Wasp world of large, happy, well-clothed families. As an artist and art historian, Edmund succumbs to the current temptation of mistaking the artistic representation for the thing it represents; he is a poseur occasionally fooled by his own posturings. These are poignant, however, because he, like so many of his contemporary counterparts, yearns to believe in the past and in the traditions which he arrogantly abjures. For Edmund, this takes the form of rejecting Mother Russia, Slavic mysticism, the Orthodox Church and God. Even these rejections, however, are immature insofar as he wants to have his cake and eat it too. He discounts the faith of the saints, but tells Claire, "saints are one of my favorite subjects, you can't help but be a specialist in saints when you're an art historian, I collect them, I'm an aficionado." Similarly, he says that he wants his disbelief to have the "violence and passion of faith," and he defines an atheist as "a God-obsessed maniac who witnesses God's absence everywhere, a man with deep religious convictions who truly believes in the nonexistence of God."

Belief in all of reality's substance and aspects is as much a problem throughout *World Without End* as it is in the world of our time. But Edmund has an idea of where his final hope for belief and faith might lie. He has no wife, no children and no chastity, yet he recognizes that the family is the seed bed for all kinds of faith: "Even though I don't have one I'm . . . concerned with the survival of the family." He is concerned with who will raise the children of today and tomorrow:

And who would bring up this superb child? Women were leaving home to find a possible death in good causes, schools were dissolving under the threat of radical idiots, the daughters of women who'd gone mad from stay-

"*World Without End*' is a very good novel, and a fine surprise."

— John Leonard
New York Times

fictional counterparts in that they realize that something is radically wrong with their lives, and they have a glimmering that the absence in their lives is connected to their failure to establish lasting values and families, to suffer willingly for others. In fact, when the book opens, all three, who at forty-five have been friends for thirty years, are together in Russia on a trip "to figure out how to live the last third of our lives; after forty-five there isn't much left but friendship is there, only friends will tell you the truths that you need to hear to make the last part of your existence bearable."

The rest of the novel concerns what friends will and will not tell one and how bearable and/or unbearable these truths and half-truths make one's life. This "truth-in," as it is somewhat archly called once in the book, covers a good deal of ground and shows three characters turning up virtually every modern cul-de-sac as a way toward self-fulfillment until they arrive at something that John Bunyan would have called the straight and narrow. Ironically, they discover that this path is infinitely easier to travel than any of the other torturous ones that they had mapped out for themselves. These paths are metaphors for the many shallow, but glamorous, roles that modern man tries out in an effort to elude the maturity

primitive, simple dreams . . . I dream of being precisely the opposite of what I am, there are many children about and I must cook for fourteen and I'm constantly out of food and everyone shouts at me."

Although Claire is physically and spiritually quite different from Sophie, she too exemplifies a woman who fails because she cannot nurture others or herself. Claire is devoted neither to her marriage nor to her child, but to extra-familial causes. This altruism masks her refusal to help, to know and to love any particular human beings on an intimate level. Oblivious to the domestic misery that she causes as a result of her immersion in schemes to save the world, Claire sees no sense in her own husband's prayer that someone "save us from the savers." Her refusal to sacrifice her image of herself for those close to her continues, of course, when she retreats to an Anglican convent to purify herself and to contemplate the lives of the great medieval abbesses. As a result of this experience, however, she realizes something about herself. She confesses to Sophie, "for my first twenty-five years I hadn't learned friendship the way other people haven't learned to swim or ride a bicycle."

Edmund, the third member of the trio, repeatedly declares that he loves both

ing at home were going mad from being too much in the world.

The ritual that Edmund invents and adheres to throughout his life is one that centers on devotion to the household gods, as it were. From the time that he is an adolescent, he returns to Nantucket in the summers and watches the ferry unload, trying to pick the most perfect family. In his later years, he is distressed that the families are not like those of yesteryear; there are fewer families and more single men and women. Perhaps in the single loners disgorged from the ferry he really sees himself.

The solitude of 20th-century man and

the pain of that solitariness permeate *World Without End* and *Baby*. Both novels testify to the anguish of living for oneself alone, or for some inanimate object, or for a cause unworthy of one's devotion. The great modern refuge—escapism—is itself a prison of illusion far more constraining than the bonds of matrimony, family or faith. The titles of these two books are metaphoric, but perhaps not in the way their authors intended. Man can either *be* the baby or *have* the baby. He either condemns himself to an eternal infancy or to at least genetic immortality. If man insists on being the baby, he lives in a world which is forever becoming, but never is. □

Among the Visionaries & Economic Stand-up Comics

Tom Hayden: *The American Future: New Visions Beyond Old Frontiers*; South End Press; Boston.

Robert Kuttner: *Revolt of the Haves*; Simon & Schuster; New York.

by Gavin D. Arbuckle

Since the advent of the Dictaphone there is no longer any guarantee that a published author will be literate. Mr. Hayden brings this sign of the times a few steps further: he proves that a visionary need not be coherent. We somehow know that truth all too well from the daily press and television, but it is always interesting to see it confirmed in a published volume of radical "philosophy."

The first half of Hayden's book contains his revelations about the nature of American life. His views must be seen as revelation, since they are cer-

tainly not derived from any careful study of earthly evidence. Not only is the book almost totally devoid of solid evidence (for fairly obvious reasons), but also it contains virtually no argument or analysis. He admiringly discusses the deep spirituality of the Ayatollah Khomeini,

"Tom Hayden's important new book on the American future . . . is serious, well-documented and . . . he strikes a creative balance between the pragmatic and the ideal."

— *The Nation*

solemnly informs us that the American Constitution is derived from the institutions of the Iroquis (sic), and claims that comprehensive price controls will solve a multitude of economic problems. When an author seeks to define the temper of our times and to capture the essence of a nation's cultural heritage, it seems a trifle churlish to demand that his every observation be solidly grounded in factual evidence. What cannot be forgiven is that Hayden's revelations are so uniformly dull and stupid.

Hayden is an intellectual Levite. When he chances upon an interesting or compli-

cated issue lying bleeding in the road and crying out for investigation and analysis, he invariably passes by on the other side. Thus he states that Iranian culture is not inferior to American culture, but he shows not the slightest interest in indicating what standards might be used in comparing cultural qualities. He asserts that corporate power causes inflation but has nothing to say about the possible relationship between rates of change of corporate concentration, rates of inflation or the effects of macroeconomic policies. He calls simultaneously for nationwide price controls on fuel and necessities and for a reduction in the size and power of government bureaucracies. He has no interest in the actual workings of price-control schemes and makes no attempt to resolve the inconsistency of his two recommendations.

All that is enough to lead one to suspect that Hayden is not a thinker but what James N. Wood called a corsair of democracy—a professional mob-master, a merchant of delusions, a pumper-up of popular fears and rages. He forces every contemporary condition, from poverty to cancer, from inflation to the flight of refugees from Vietnam, into the service of his grim litany on the oppressiveness of his two obsessions—American cul-

ture and American business.

The second part of Mr. Hayden's book presents his program for "economic democracy," which turns out to be decentralized socialism. Here again, characteristically, Hayden appears to be unaware of any of the complications and difficulties his scheme would involve. In keeping with his hostile view of business activity, he recommends what amounts to a wholesale reallocation of property rights from those who produce things to those supposedly suffering the unfortunate side effects of production. Price,

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wage and investment levels would be set by local political authorities. Thus the production of goods and services would be severely discouraged under a plan requiring producers to pay off all sorts of racial minorities, the poor and the environmentally affected. This plan would subject producers to severe criminal sanctions for any violation of safety, health and consumer-protection standards, and then dispose of any residual profit by politically regulating wages and prices. This is entirely consistent with Hayden's apparent belief that most economic activity in America generates more costs than benefits. The virulence of Hayden's hostility to production makes him resemble one of Ayn Rand's less sophisticated villains.

Perhaps the most revealing measure of the quality of Hayden's thought is the lack of correspondence between the problems he is attempting to address and the solution he proposes. He complains of cultural corruption, pollution, the power of multinational corporations and the costs of interjurisdictional movements of production. His solution to these alleged national and international problems is to concentrate political power at the local level. Yet, as long as diverse policies were followed by different local jurisdictions, productive businesses and individuals could easily escape Hayden's punitive regulations by fleeing to less hostile communities. In the absence of strong state and local regulatory authority, the very polluting and destructive operations Hayden seeks to suppress could function with impunity a few miles upwind from his house, if a neighboring local authority were perverse enough to believe that the benefits from productive activity exceeded the costs. This possibility would be even more likely if the costs could be imposed on people in other jurisdictions, so a shift of regulatory authority to the local level might well result in a net increase in the very activities Hayden wishes to suppress.

In short, both the problems Hayden identifies and the solutions he proposes

are fantasies, and inane fantasies at that. It is difficult to understand what audience his book seeks to address, as any reader possessed of sufficient determination to finish the work would be most unlikely to find its contents impressive or enlightening.

* * *

Nothing seems to excite the hubris of the professional writer so much as writing about economics. Like any good journalist, Robert Kuttner would probably regard it as highly unprofessional to print names, dates or figures without verifying their accuracy, yet he has no hesitation in asserting, without the support of a single footnote, that equal tax cuts for big business and for low-income individuals would have the same economic effects. Which puts his act at about the intellectual level of a



stand-up comic.

Noneconomists of every political stripe like to pretend that any public-policy decision can be reduced largely

to a matter of ideology and opinion, since this allows them to hold forth on important but complicated matters without taking the trouble to understand them. Thus, for Kuttner, the story of tax policy is a story of personalities, pressure groups, public sentiment and devious special interests; any evidence bearing on the actual economic impact of tax changes is awarded only brief and often derisive references. This approach would be reasonable if Kuttner restricted himself to presenting a narrative and political analysis of recent American tax and spending limitation initiatives. Within his areas of expertise—journalism and political science—Kuttner presents a lucid and well-reasoned discussion. Unfortunately he also insists on discussing a myriad of complex economic questions while referring to, at most, a dozen academic sources.

Public finance is one of the oldest and best-established areas of economic inquiry. There is a mass of empirical evidence relevant to tax questions, which any professor or graduate student in the field could easily summarize for a nonprofessional audience. Yet for Kuttner the evidence seems not to matter, even though he considers tax questions important enough for an eighty-page discussion. He devotes a dozen pages to discussing the relationship between the level of the capital-gains tax and investment, of which a single paragraph mentions a few empirical studies. A three-page discussion, which brands accelerated depreciation for business assets as a "raid on the treasury" and the "latest tax-cut gimmick," sure to have no impact on the level of investment, refers to no evidence at all—not even to several recent studies that lend some support to these conclusions.

Sometimes the absence of references becomes almost bizarre. Kuttner attacks a body of literature which suggests that the rate of capital formation is influenced by the level of taxation, but he identifies no more than two or three of the works he criticizes. He states that his view is supported by other research-

ers, who also remain unidentified. His comparison of international rates of growth and taxation is completely pointless; he flounders about in a morass of randomly selected statistics without the assistance of either the theory or the evidence which more extensive reference to the academic sources would have provided. This aversion to evidence is all the more peculiar in that a substantial proportion of the public-finance literature would have provided support for his liberal views of tax reform. His dereliction might be due to ignorance, but it may also be a symptom of a deeper malaise. The step from believing that realities are less important than perceptions in political life to believing the same of intellectual life is not a large one. The difficulty of discovering the truth about complex human activities can easily lead people to believe that the investigation is not worthwhile.

Meaningful intellectual discourse

can exist only between people who recognize a common ground, who can interpret their differences not as mere conflicts of opinion but as positions which can be supported and justified by some reasonably objective standards of careful inquiry, professional competence and intellectual integrity. Deliberate refusal to admit that empirical evidence and questions of fact are of critical importance in intellectual debate tends to allow an exchange of views to be dominated by *ad hominem* slurs and brandished opinion polls. In such an atmosphere simple, but wrong, positions may often seem stronger than complicated, but right, ones. Quite apart from the direct costs of formulating policies in ignorance of economic realities, an indifference to empirical evidence degrades the intellectual environment of a society. The proposition that authors ought to know what they are writing about amounts to more than a justification for book reviewers' conceits. □

plifying ancient divisions and spreading outright lies along the way. But Evelyn Waugh made the same point much more effectively, years ago, in *Scoop*:

You know, when I first started in journalism I used to think that foreign correspondents spoke every language under the sun and spent their lives studying international conditions . . . On Monday afternoon I was in East Sheen breaking the news to a widow of her husband's death leap with a champion girl cyclist—the wrong widow as it turned out; the husband came back from business while I was there and cut up very nasty. Next day the chief has me in and says, 'Corker, you're off to Ishmaelia.'

It is not, as Said believes, a situation which applies only when the Western press looks outward to non-Western peoples. If Dr. Said were to talk to the sewage commissioner of Dubuque or the mayor of Peoria he would likely find similar feelings of outrage. What really irks Dr. Said is that the Western press covers the Islamic world like . . . well, Westerners. But short of licensing only Oxford dons he offers no realistic suggestions as to how to overcome this deficiency. And although he goes into great detail as to what Islam is not, Dr. Said seems to be confused about just what Islam is. That is exactly where Naipaul begins. By allowing his readers to see Islam through the eyes and, more importantly, the hearts of his subjects, he provides the reader with a glimpse of the diversity of these nations as well as the shared belief that faith comes first.

Most reviews of Naipaul's book—and there have been many—have focused on the author rather than his work. Those few who do attempt actually to discuss his book are thoroughly annoyed with Naipaul because he refuses to resort to the usual *mea culpas* on behalf of Western civilization, thus forcing them to acknowledge his critiques of the Islamic countries. These are unpleasant. The inconvenient fact

Faith, Truth & Reality

V. S. Naipaul: *Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey*; Alfred A. Knopf; New York.

Edward W. Said: *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*; Pantheon Books; New York.

by William McGurn

Before the oil embargo, the vast majority of Americans was unfamiliar with places like Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, etc. Since then, however, we have had the formation of OPEC, the fall of the Shah, the hostage crisis and, lately, the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar el Sadat. Though the names and major characters are by now more familiar,

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Americans still have little understanding of the profound divisions and loyalties of these people and their relationship with Islam.

Two recent books address the Islamic faith in ways that are diametrically opposed both in quality and approach. The better of the two is that of Mr. V. S. Naipaul, a chronicle of his seven-month trip through Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia and Indonesia. It is his seventeenth book, ten of which are novels, and it is exactly the novelist's flair for developing characters that makes this book come alive. The second is by Dr. Edward W. Said, a Columbia University professor of English and comparative literature.

Dr. Said's major complaint (aside from the mere existence of the state of Israel) is that the media, and especially but not exclusively the American media, give poor and superficial coverage to the Islamic world, creating stereotypes, sim-

is that most Islamic countries remain barbaric and backward in the middle of the 20th century. And, contrary to popular enlightened sentiment (best demonstrated by the United Nations), this has not been caused by the West. In fact, anyone with a shred of intellectual honesty realizes that whatever degree of modern civilization has been attained in these countries has come from outside.

The meager development of acquired aspects of civilized society is due, almost exclusively, to the resistance of Islam. Over and over, Naipaul demonstrates that the revolutionaries, as well as the Shah's developing middle class, were dependent upon the West even for their ideas for revolution and change. Witness the numerous Islamic

revolutionaries who came to America to study. Even Khomeini spent his exile not in any Muslim state, but in France. For all the talk about the "Satanic West," the revolutionaries require Western learning—and then rationalize their use of it:

There was a point in this. The West, which had provided Mohammed with academic learning, was open to the criticism it had trained him in. Islam, which had not provided this learning, which provided only the restoring faith, was exempt.

The result is an intellectual and cultural abyss.

It is not enough to counter that these countries were backward to begin with. Other nations have accomplished more. Even within the Islamic nations, it is

the non-Muslims—the Chinese in Malaysia, the Hindus in India and, years ago, the Jews in the Ottoman Empire—who have supplied the impetus for progress. The resistance to advancement is, if not a spiritual component of the faith, at least its most consistent practical characteristic, inseparable from the practice of the religion. Muslim leaders who have attempted to modernize their countries have not fared well. Mr. Bhutto, Pakistan's only elected prime minister, was arrested and hanged. The Shah was deposed by students and mullahs who shouted "Death to Carter" one day and "Death to Bani Sadr" the next. Like Khomeini, Bani Sadr had to look to France for safety. Lastly, Anwar Sadat, an outcast in the Muslim world for establishing a relationship with Israel, was assassinated for his contributions to world peace and progress in the Middle East.

In one sense, Sadat *was* the threat to Islamic unity that his enemies made him out to be, but for reasons they most likely would not understand. The creation of the state of Israel, which most Muslims refuse to recognize, was a tremendous impetus to Arab unity—it gave them a scapegoat, a common denominator for hatred, to blame for every misfortune. Israel's dramatic conquering of an essentially barren land and its decisive foreign policy provide stark contrast to the poverty and chaos that characterize its Arab neighbors. Without Israel to hate and denounce, the Islamic countries would have to return to their centuries-old practice of cutting each other's throats, and OPEC would not even be conceivable.

Islam's failure to grasp the very rudiments of civilization is the reason these nations remain intellectually and socially impoverished in spite of the oil wealth many enjoy. Oil gives only the illusion of wealth because it is not the result of a healthy and vigorous economy, but of luck. It is as though one were to hand a child a million dollars: instead of building upon it the child would undoubtedly squander it on ostentatious playthings.

In the Mail

Appalachian Maryland and the World edited by Paul R. LaChance; University Press of America; Washington, D.C. A collection of papers presented at an International Education Symposium held at Frostburg State College considering the challenges and possibilities of global approaches to liberal-arts education.

Encyclopedia of Entrepreneurship edited by Calvin A. Kent, Donald L. Sexton and Karl H. Vesper; Prentice-Hall; Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. A summary of the current practices and existing research about entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship.

Understanding the Modern Predicament by Dwight D. Murphey; University Press of America; Washington, D.C. An analysis of modern civilization which maintains that society has been shaped by an existential crisis compounded by several elements (the first of four volumes).

The Place of Poetry: Two Centuries of an Art in Crisis by Christopher Clausen; University Press of Kentucky; Lexington, Kentucky. A study of the current cultural status of poetry in the English-speaking world and reasons for its decline.

The Oil Muddle: Control vs. Competition by James B. Ramsey; Ethics and Public Policy Center; Washington, D.C. A nontechnical consideration of the oil industry from the standpoint of an economist.

Selected Media Comments on The Hoover Institution: September '80-July '81 edited by George Marotta; The Hoover Institution; Stanford, California. Reprints of articles from newspapers across the country about The Hoover Institution.

A Conversation with Michael Novak and Richard Schifter: Human Rights and the United Nations; American Enterprise Institute; Washington, D.C. Comments, questions and answers from Novak and Schifter as they discuss their roles as U.S. representative and alternate representative to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights.

The Hoover Institution Report 1981; The Hoover Institution; Stanford, California. A summary of the 1981 activities of the Hoover Institution.

What better example of this is there than the garish homes of oil-rich sheiks?

Through it all, the people remain poor, with very little real hope for the future. Yet failure does not weaken the faith. On the contrary, failure is portrayed as its strength, confirming the widespread belief that the West succeeds materially because it is unspiritual and materialistic, while the Islamic people fail because they are holy. The error here is common: although there are poor people who are in fact virtuous, they are not virtuous *because* they are poor. Some people are poor because they are shiftless, intemperate, lazy or stupid. And some people are rich because they cheat and steal—it is impossible to state virtue in terms of wealth. But if Islam is ever going to advance its people, it will be with rulers like the Shah and President Sadat, dictators both, one thing they had in common with the other rulers of their faith. The embarrassing fact for Third World apologists is that the Shah was deposed because he was *too* progressive—giving women rights, trying to bring his country into the 20th century. Is there anyone today who can seriously claim that Iran is better off with the Ayatollah?

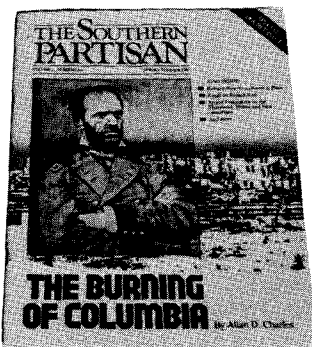
If there is a flaw in Naipaul's otherwise perceptive work, it is that he seems not to understand the Judeo-Christian basis of the Western world he so admires. Dr. Said, though he might not agree with these basic values, at least acknowledges their existence. Still, such a misunderstanding does not prevent Naipaul from making his point and accurately assessing the failure of the Islamic countries. Theocracy is usually the sign of an immature faith, one which fails to acknowledge the true nature of the world and its flawed inhabitants. In many ways it mirrors the fallacies of communism. In the face of Islam's built-in resistance, progress has to be forced against centuries-old practice, which requires rulers like the Shah and Mr. Sadat—dictators who understood tradition.

For now, Iran has reverted to the past, attempting to eradicate every vestige of the Shah's influence. Egypt's position is precarious, to say the least. More than its perpetual poverty, the major defining characteristic of Islam has been its zeal and persistence. It has

endured for centuries under conditions that have overwhelmed other faiths. If nothing else, Naipaul's characters show that the belief is still there, real and solid, ironically not harmed but strengthened by the turmoil surrounding it. □

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Of Human Commonplaces

Sally George: *Frog Salad*; Charles Scribner's Sons; New York.

Faith Sullivan: *Repent, Lanny Merkel*; McGraw-Hill; New York.

Rob Forman Dew: *Dale Loves Sophie to Death*; Farrar, Straus & Giroux; New York.

by Barbara Worden

The characters in all three of these novels have fixations on their pasts; they differ radically in what they choose to do with their obsessions in order to enrich the present. Sullivan and George have chosen to present people who are psychologically stuck at some point in much the same way that a needle can be stuck on a record. These characters think about, talk about and dream intensely about their private myths of "what made me happy way back when." They do this so often that their present lives are almost invisible. Their memories are like the memories of the elderly, the same story endlessly repeated—but the elderly must be listened to for courtesy's sake.

Dale Loves Sophie to Death is more interesting than the others because the novelist, and through her the heroine, shows how memory can both cripple and cure. By the end of the novel, it seems that the heroine has accomplished something. Crippled relationships with parents, children and spouses have been revealed and are already beginning to straighten out and strengthen. The past is a tunnel which leads into the sunshine of maturity rather than a hole in the ground in which children can hide.

Since Sullivan and George have chosen to portray characters fixed in the past, they are saddled with a major

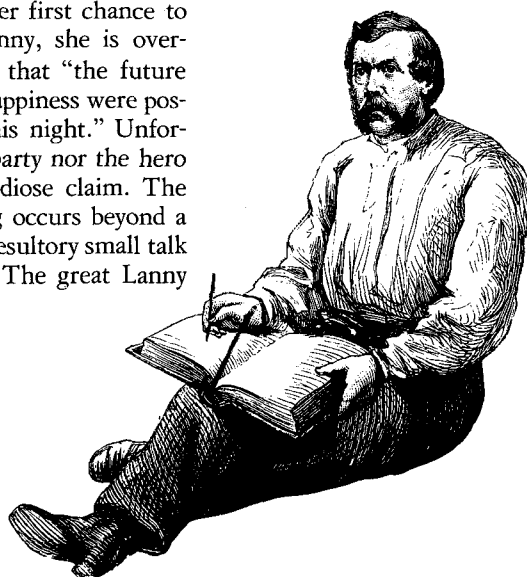
problem: people who just do not grow up are boring. They "solve" this problem by being cute. Laura, the heroine of *Repent, Lanny Merkel*, wants to be famous and recognized, to be in *Who's Who*, but she has no idea of what work to do to get there. Since most of her attempts to achieve fame, including a spectacularly weird job as an actress in an amateur avant-garde play, have failed deservedly, her class reunion seems to be the answer. She gets a letter pleading for her to go to the reunion, and this is what follows:

Reading the note through the first of twenty-six times, I reeled under the percussion of Lanny's name. It leaped noisily from the page, reverberating through the house like a struck gong.

Laura's obsession with Lanny Merkel, her high-school sweetheart, stems from the break-up of their romance shortly before graduation. Laura reacted to this calamity by painting "Repent, Lanny Merkel" in red on fourteen billboards throughout the town and then had to spend the morning after graduation restoring them to their original state. As Laura dresses for the first big party of the reunion and her first chance to see the immortal Lanny, she is overwhelmed by the idea that "the future of my marriage and happiness were possibly to be decided this night." Unfortunately neither the party nor the hero lives up to this grandiose claim. The party is dull. Nothing occurs beyond a lot of adults making desultory small talk and dancing ineptly. The great Lanny

himself is militantly ordinary, good-looking and suburban when he needs to be either superbly unattractive or superbly glamorous. Much of the conversation at the parties is produced by someone's coming up to Laura and asking her to describe the great sign caper. And yes, Virginia, Lanny and Laura do finally get to make it "all the way." Laura then flies back to California, finally able to let the past die—an existential solution to one woman's problems which makes the authoress of the novel look like her calling should be to the appliance-repair field.

The past fixation of the characters in *Frog Salad* is not an individual past, but a group past. A crowd of ex-60's radicals, out of place in the 70's, are longingly remembering the good old days of sit-ins and tear gas. Significantly, it is hard to tell what cause they were fighting for. It looks as if both then and now they were trying to revivify a world where they were joyful, free of responsibility and creative. However, the glimpses we get of their lives now make us doubtful of their marvelous past, since their less-than-marvelous present shows nothing but weakness, vagueness,



Dr. Worden is professor of English at Friends Bible College in Haviland, Kansas.

callousness, shallowness, and ineptness of both characters and existences. Ms. George obviously perceives humor in the cheapest sexual symbolism and finds crude genital obsessions subtly amusing.

By comparison, *Dale Loves Sophie to Death* emerges as the story of real living, breathing, bleeding people. As the novel opens, the wife of a New England college professor still tends to see life in terms of the graffiti on a wall outside town which furnishes the title for the book. She sees life as relationships fixed in amber at the high-school level, waiting for her to understand and deal with them, thus perfecting all that is wrong in the present. Unlike the characters in the two other novels, though,

she is not permitted to rest at this immature level. The author forces her to come to terms with her many failures of love and understanding which have brought spiritual death rather than life to those whose lives she has touched. What went wrong in her teen romance with her brother's best friend helps to tell her what is wrong in her marriage. Her doctor father, hitherto stigmatized as the callous deserter of her hard-working decorator mother, becomes the only man who can communicate with her seriously disturbed son. At the end of the novel, the husband comes to join his family in Ohio, and it is clear that this is the last time his wife will try to use her self-created time machine, a device she no longer needs. □

The Old In & Out— or, The Movie Critics

David Thomson: *Overexposures: The Crisis in American Filmmaking*; William Morrow & Co.; New York.

Richard Schickel: *Singled Out*; The Viking Press; New York.

by Gary S. Vasilash

Detroit. More than anything else, the word immediately conjures up the qualifier, "The Motor City." Look at any travel poster depicting the spot and you'll see a stylized tire or a Spartan Model-T. The most famous music to come out of Detroit—from the likes of pre-L.A. Diana Ross and Stevie Wonder, when his name was preceded with "Little"—is known as "The Motown Sound." Whenever I ask a New Yorker how long it takes him to get to work, the answer is always based on transit time to the train, train time, and the time required for a brisk stroll to the office. The answer

from a Detroiter is invariably based on mileage; the questioner is expected to know the route and to be able to determine the typical elapsed time, and since practically all adults drive, the answer is satisfactory. While other cities, such as Los Angeles, feature elaborate billboards depicting rock album covers heightened with a 3-D effect, the most noteworthy billboard in Detroit features something resembling an odometer, which advances in sync with U.S. auto production. In headier days, the numbers spun like a Cadillac going 70 mph on a freeway; in these days of "drive 55," those going by the sign might as well be watching a dashboard clock—a device which is notoriously inefficient.

The OPEC oil price increases, the big-car mentality of Detroit auto execs, government regulations and the popularity of foreign imports have almost turned the Motor City into a giant annex of the Henry Ford Museum. Many small businesses in the area that depended on traffic were driven out of business as people decided to stay home more often.

Notably, many gas stations have closed since the mid-70's. Some have turned into flower shops, others were razed to build parking lots. And others have been turned into porno movie theaters. Where you could once get premium, regular, your windows washed and your oil checked, you can now view the likes of *Talk Dirty to Me*, *Honey Doll Jones* and *The Girls of Mr. X*.

Downtown Detroit theaters became more inaccessible and outlying suburban malls offered a sense of safety and shopping along with movies, so for a number of years (before Detroit began its attempt to cast itself as the Renaissance City), the city's once-splendid picture palaces ran porno, Kung-Fu and blacksploitation (a hybrid genre that traces its roots back to *Shaft* and *Super Fly*) films among the cracked plaster statuary and trash-filled fountains. Drive-ins were obvious targets of high gasoline prices. But Detroiters, having a feeling of comfortable intimacy with their cars (e.g. a friend used to change his oil—needlessly—every week; he just liked to work on his car, even though it didn't need any work), often like to be behind the wheel, so drive-ins are popular, even on winter nights when the lots look like snow-blown wastelands. Still attendance fell, so some theater owners opened liquor stands on the premises to increase revenues. Many indoor theaters in the area have also started serving drinks in their subdivided screening rooms; one I was recently in obviously has something of a wag on its staff, as a banner draped above a section of seats reads "Cocktail Loge." And if the prospect of beer with popcorn doesn't get the folks in, then the \$1.50 admission price for an evening presentation of a first-run film certainly will help. The bottom line for movie exhibitors in Detroit is simply that in a town where lines at the unemployment commission offices have replaced those that once ringed movie houses, popular taste must be addressed with whatever cajolery (porno, booze,

cheap seats) it takes to sell tickets.

Another industrial city, Hollywood, is suffering, too. Or so claims David Thomson in *Overexposures: The Crisis in American Filmmaking*. Economics are at the bottom of the illness. Thomson performs a valuable service with his exploratory surgery of the L.A.-based film industry when he details the costs of making a Hollywood feature. Thomson uses the example of what it would cost to put on the screen Gay Talese's *Thy Neighbor's Wife*, a book which he

points out has been sold for \$2.5 million for that purpose.

It seems that Hollywood accountants look at two cost centers. One includes the property, script, producer, director and stars. The other comprises everything else needed to produce a film: technicians, cast, equipment, sets, costumes, film stock, processing and the rest. Thomson figures that *Thy Neighbor's Wife* would come in at \$17.8 million. By way of comparison, he notes that 1941 cost \$40 million, *Apocalypse Now* ran up a \$31-million bill, and *The Blues Brothers* cost a mere \$27 million.

Payment for these big-ticket items is made at the box office (and by sales to television). Thomson points out that the size of film audiences has been decreasing—that while after World War II 100 million tickets per week were sold, “the ‘stability’ of the seventies has been very hard pressed not to slip below the mark of 20 million a week. Moreover, even though in 1946 the majority of films were both modest and profitable, by 1980 a terrifying spiral obtained whereby fewer films were made, more of them cost more, and a fraction were profitable.” In other words, Hollywood is running out of gas, yet it still seems to be producing vehicles with fins, chrome and the rest of the trimmings.

Thomson is incensed by the current situation he perceives in American filmmaking, a situation which he blames on the money-grubbing capitalists who put up the monies to make movies, people who, naturally, have no taste for any subtle flavors. Sneers Thomson:

American movies have been capitalist: They accumulate incidents and turn them into narrative. The industrial method of making films fell meekly into the cultural consequences of their own process. The way of making films never acknowledged or learned from the way of watching them—the delirium of dream, the headlong passage of time and image, the siren that is lyrical but not consequential. That refusal to heed the nature of experience has

restricted nearly every American film.

There are people ready to make the delirious types of films that Thomson aches for. He asserts, “People long to make films, to turn reality into a beautiful, arousing set of symbols. They want to communicate.” Here comes the coordinating conjunction followed by the liberal lament. The passage continues, “But they cannot abide the way filmmaking forces them to keep company with sharks and profiteers. They cannot endure communicated feeling being sold and spoiled by commerce.” Naturally.

As anyone knows who has ever bought film to shoot the family vacation, film is expensive. Thomson himself points out the stellar costs associated with making a feature film. He may know a great deal about who made which film and when, but he betrays an extraordinary ignorance of basic economics, an ignorance that is displayed by many of those who *know* that somewhere there's a pile of money being hoarded, money that, in their opinion, would be best spent by self-proclaimed artists who want to force their delusions on the rest of society. Those people should try to get in touch with the Wizard of Oz.

Thomson discusses a number of directors in *Overexposures* and treats most in an avuncular manner, since they need, it seems, to be lightly chastised for associating with sharks. Paul Schrader, creator of *Taxi Driver* and *American Gigolo*, is okay, yet Thomson finds a certain commercial quality to *Gigolo* and so slaps Schrader's wrist. James Toback has the right stuff: he was the child of upper-class New York parents and rejected what was offered. Says Thomson, “On and off, he has mixed with the underworld, and like Norman Mailer he is attracted to what he sees as the existential glamour of the criminal outsider.” Never mind that underworld figures have a penchant for

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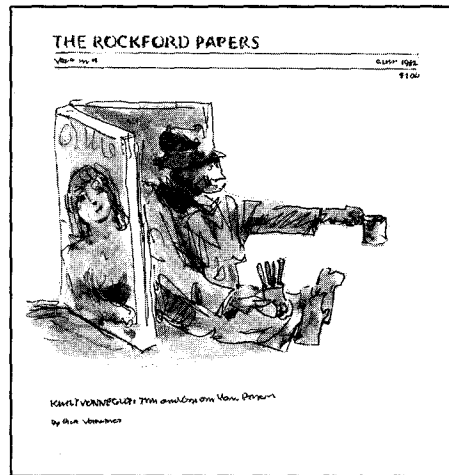
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making money, to say nothing of the fact that Mailer constantly laments his lack of lucre. Sex, gambling, blood—these are the things that Thomson indicates Toback has on his mind, and the filming of them is presented as an honorable exercise which Toback should be permitted, without the restrictions of minor things like money worries. And if he desires to cook swill, we are all expected to eat from his trough and to pay for the honor. After all, art requires communication.

One relatively young film-maker is a particular object of Thomson's wrath. Thomson calls George Lucas a name which I suppose he spits out when he vocalizes it: "The supreme exponent of television on the large screen." The word *television* comes out with a dash of lunar caustic. Interestingly, George Lucas is the most solvent of those directors detailed (including "Angel Face" Warren Beatty), which has to be some sort of crime in Thomson's world, where the financially successful *have* to be doing something wrong.

As noted earlier, Thomson is distressed by the fact that directors have to bow down to the moneyed interests if they want to capture any of their vision on film. Thanks to the successful *Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back*, Lucas doesn't have to do that. He is doing so well that he was the subject of a feature in *Fortune* (October 6, 1980), "The Empire Pays Off," in which he says, "I'm trying to turn the system around. The studios use films they don't have the vaguest idea how to make to earn profits for their shareholders. I'm using my profits to make films."

It would seem that such an attitude would make Lucas a patron saint for Thomson, but no, Thomson condemns Lucas. His mortal sin? Lucas makes movies that young people enjoy (Thomson implies that no one above the age of reason finds anything of value in a Lucas film). Young people who can't get enough of the *Star Wars* saga and Indiana Jones of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* are causing the decline and possible fall

of American filmmaking, shrieks Thomson. I'll admit that Luke Skywalker isn't nearly as genuine as *Taxi Driver's* Travis Bickle, but if that's what the crisis is all about, then I think that there's rather a crisis in American film criticism.

Richard Schickel is probably best known as a film critic for *Time* magazine. But film is not the subject of *Singled Out*. I wonder if Schickel has time to go to the movies anymore, wrapped up as he is in a new lifestyle that seemingly has him constantly on the move, from amour to amour. *Singled Out* is a self-help guide for "middle class, middle-brow" American males who, like Schickel, are in their 40's and have ended their marriages. It must be noted that it's preferable if the male has been told to pack up and get out by his once-beloved-and-now-boring, as that will make the S.O. lifestyle more psychologically—and, naturally, physically—groovy. (I hate to use that word, but it simply fits the style of the subject at hand.)

As I went through the pages, I began to think of it as one of the funniest books about relationships between men and women since *Is Sex Necessary?* by Thurber and White. But then I realized that Schickel is serious, and that his book is actually of the type that Messrs. Thurber and White eviscerated. I should have known that he was serious before I started, considering the exalted praise the book has received. According to a blurb on the dust jacket from Pete Hamill (you know, the guy who hangs his ultrasuede jacket at Shirley MacLaine's—or is that Jackie O's—or Mary Tyler Moore's?), the book, an expanded version of an essay that appeared in *Esquire*, is "The most entertaining treatise on the love game since Stendhal crossed the finish line." Love game? Henri Beyle in a Pierre Cardin velour jogging suit? Yes, that's the caliber of the work. Moreover, that doyenne of modern morals and mores (things that have become qualified for study at the Center for Short-lived Phenomena, I

suspect), Gloria Vanderbilt, gushes, "On this earth at last lives a man who knows what women want. Richard Schickel says it all." This is pretty heavy stuff, a veritable *The Complete Book of Running* for athletes involved in that full-body contact sport known as the love game. It's all covered in a brief 115 pages, which is important since game participants have little time for anything drab and mundane like reading, as there are too many cute little bottoms to be pinched. (Note: Schickel characterizes derrières in that manner; pinching is my euphemism.)

One passage can provide a key to understanding both Schickel's point of view and his attitude:

Now, as somebody or other used to say, I want to make one thing perfectly clear, and that is that I'm not talking marriage here. I'm *never* talking marriage. Don't see any point to it, since I've already done my bit to propagate the race.

His moral attitude can be formulated to read: father a child; have a vasectomy; have a ball. As ad copy for the Club Méditerranée it makes sense—as human advice from a writer it borders on moronic minimalism.

Interestingly, Schickel never tells his lonely readers how they are supposed to find those lovely, semiliberated ladies who are just panting to squeeze between the sheets. Perhaps once a person is S.O. he exudes a certain chemistry that drives women wild, just like in those commercials for cheap after-shave. And that's what this book is like: Some poor guy sees the commercial, buys the vile-smelling lotion, applies it, and thinks he's irresistible. It makes him feel wonderful. Later that evening, when he realizes that the women he tries to get next to in the posh singles bar treat him just like they did the week before—or maybe even a little more brusquely, as they catch the cloying smell—he is crushed. (Read *Singled Out* for lotion.) □

COMMENDABLES

Wistful Memories

Mark Girouard: *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman*; Yale University Press; New Haven.

In 1790, with the "sophisters, economists, and calculators" holding sway in revolutionary France, Edmund Burke lamented that "the age of chivalry is gone." For once, Burke's powers of discernment failed him, for as Mark Girouard notes in *The Return to Camelot*, when Burke uttered his requiescat over the grave, chivalry had already launched a comeback in England. In this richly illustrated volume Girouard traces this revival from its birth in the late 18th century to its destruction in the mud and gore of the Western Front in 1917. Camelot came once again to England in the 19th century, and while it lasted upper-class Englishmen infused the mundane world with lofty ideals and a radiant vision of the romance of life. Dickens's Boudierbys and Gradgrinds—those offspring of the Utilitarians and Manchesterians—had their hands full with

these men devoted to the ethics of chivalry.

Girouard might easily have made sport with this curious phenomenon, for what could be more deliciously anachronistic to our own sophisters and calculators than the Eglinton Tournament of 1839, in which armored knights thundered down the course to test their valor? But something deeper lay beneath such ludicrous episodes: at its best, the revival of chivalry inspired Englishmen to strive for virtues—courage, honor, duty, sportsmanship—which were not automatically vouchsafed to mortals. For every Englishman who made a mockery of the chivalric code by strutting about in a plumed helmet, another paid tribute to the ennobling effects of the code by aspiring to meet its highest standards, thereby injecting a certain grace into his life. Probably only a small number of Girouard's readers will understand the difference between these two types; Burke's age of chivalry is truly gone now. □

In the Mail

Letters to Barbara by Glenn Meeter; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; Grand Rapids, Michigan. An exploration of human strengths and weaknesses in a novel about the struggle of an ethnic and religious minority in America of the 1950's.

Picaros, Madmen, Naïfs, and Clowns: The Unreliable First-Person Narrator by William Riggan; Oklahoma University Press; Norman, Oklahoma. An examination and definition of the fictional autobiographer in American, British, Spanish, German, Latin and Near Eastern literature, including such works as *Moll Flanders*, *Tristram Shandy*, *Lolita*, *The Tin Drum* and *The Catcher in the Rye*.

Social Register

How should a creature of elegance of manners and refinement of habits face a dilemma presented to him or her by life? As reported from a large Midwestern city, a regular customer at a luxury gourmet shop (a counterpart of Manhattan's Zabar, Dean & DeLuca or Balducci) ran into a noisily animated family who was purchasing quantities of smoked sturgeon and Périgord pâté with food stamps. Our friend (a liberal at heart, as is usual for clients of fine victual stores) was at first exhilarated and edified by this new and unforeseen form of social justice, then perplexed and somehow depressed by a dilemma. As a citizen of a free and pluralistic society, he felt strongly that no one has any right whatsoever to dictate how or on what people spend their money. But—and here formal logic invades even the most liberal mind—are food stamps really money that belongs to the recipients? Aren't they rather an expression of society's collective concern for the misery, penury and impoverishment of those among us who are unable to provide basic nourishment for themselves? And aren't the ailments in the Zabar class not something different from what we usually consider necessary sustenance?



Our hapless observer, who has always voted for politicians dedicated to redistributive economic policies, informed us that he no longer knows whom to support in this year's elections. At the same time he declared that, as he sees it, a society which sincerely wishes to achieve true fairness and decency has no choice other than to nationalize gourmet stores. He thus fell into a quandary between conscience and self-interest, the hallmark of a truly beautiful person.

Still another possibility must be contemplated, however. What if those free spenders were in fact the heralds of a new food-stamp chic? What if they actually purchased those precious coupons from less fortunate brothers and sisters just for fun, for the satisfaction of flaunting them in a gourmet store? Why not ask Congress to revamp the Food Stamp Act and make it possible to purchase with them some other commodities, say at I. Magnin or Cartier's? Couldn't these magic coupons be used to be really "with it," "in" and "on the level"?

IN FOCUS

The Failings of Well-Meaning Journalism

Rowland Evans and Robert Novak: *The Reagan Revolution*; E. P. Dutton; New York.

Evans and Novak, the syndicated columnists, have written a remarkably friendly, though superficial, account of the origins and early accomplishments of President Reagan's administration. Their book is clear but not penetrating. It displays the characteristic failing of the authors' profession: a tendency to find historical turning points in what may well be rather minor current events and an inclination to focus on personalities and bureaucratic battles rather than hard questions of policy.

In line with their title, the authors stress that the Reagan administration is engaged in making some revolutionary changes, and, although they were once moderate liberals, they claim to approve. Actually, however, they see this "revolution" as an effort to restore America to its international position of 1955, and to its domestic orientation of 1925, albeit with the addition of some "selective social welfare programs." Conservatives of the era between the world wars might regard that emendation as the equivalent of being a "little bit" pregnant; it was precisely those programs which constituted the core of the New Deal. In fact the real policy of the administration seems to be one of merely reducing—not eliminating—some "Great Society" programs. And it should be noted that in 1955

most Americans would have been astounded that anyone, least of all conservatives, regarded our international situation as a model.

The development of supply-side economics policy, which the authors seem to favor, is a real departure from recent policy, but they portray it as merely a return to the policies of Andrew Mellon in the 1920's. Considerable space is devoted to the battle over supply-side economics, but they conspicuously fail to ask, much less answer, some hard questions—a failing characteristic of their whole book. The supply-siders stress the wisdom of the Coolidge-Mellon policies and denounce tax policies since the 1930's as unsound. The uninformed observer is bound to wonder why, if this is true, the Mellon-policy era was immediately followed by the Great Depression, while the post-World War II era saw the biggest sustained economic boom in history. Probably the supply-siders could provide satisfactory answers to these objections, but Evans and Novak simply ignore them.

The Reagan Revolution is an excellent example of the casual way in which columnists squeeze history in order to make their point. Accordingly, the authors claim that Lyndon Johnson "widened the war in Vietnam without taking Congress into his confidence." It would be truer to say that it suited Congress and LBJ's enemies to pretend that this was so

—not quite the same thing. Discouraging on the unstable fortunes of post-World War II Presidents, they stress that these leaders "encountered greater political misfortune than any group of Presidents in history," noting that only Ike served and survived two full terms. As a matter of fact, the men who served as Presidents between 1900 and 1945 fared just as badly. Only Wilson and FDR



served two (or more) complete terms, and Wilson was hardly an effective President after his 1919 stroke. Kennedy was murdered—but so was McKinley. If Truman was not elected twice, he did serve nearly two full terms; Theodore Roosevelt did no better. This sort of ominous comparison may be fashionable but, on examination, it is not very impressive. It is tempting to look back nostalgically at some things; in the election of 1912, for example, Americans were offered a choice of *three* honest and competent Presidential candidates. In some recent elections our political system has not provided us with even one good choice.

Ultimately, it seems to me that Evans and Novak have exaggerated the degree of President Reagan's "radicalism," his commitment to what they see as a "revolution." Many times they even admit to being puzzled; they cite evidence that would seem to prove that Reagan actu-

ally is a somewhat lethargic man, prone to value old friends and personal acquaintances over ideological commitments—and, perhaps, competence. The President's cabinet selections, his general conduct since the inauguration and his earlier conduct as Governor suggest he is not a right-wing ideologue, and that his conservatism has often been exaggerated. This much must be said for Evans and Novak: they do at least mention facts that don't accord with their thesis—the reader in search of data on the early days of this administration will not be disappointed.

I must, however, cavil at one cliché—the description of Ronald Reagan as a "B-movie actor." Mr. Reagan made many "A" films. He may have been usually only a "second lead," but he did get Ann Sheridan in *King's Row*—in 1941 an actor could hardly ask for more. Let us hear no more of this inaccurate, mean-spirited belittling. (A.JL)□

Perceptibles

Bill Hotchkiss: *The Medicine Calf*; W. W. Norton & Co.; New York.

Hotchkiss's novel about Mountain Man and Crow Chief Jim Beckwourth does what quality literature does best: renders life as if it were our own. Through Beckwourth, born and raised east of the Mississippi, we encounter, survive and partake of difficult experiences common to life in the far West—the violence, the rituals, the spirit of the land and the people. Hotchkiss evokes a clarity as plain as nature's seasons.

That Beckwourth was a Titan among Titans Hotchkiss makes credible by describing his prowess at everything. In this respect, he seems much like Odis-

seus or Achilles, possessing special powers which are coupled with deeply human frailties. As such, he is a great trapper and pathfinder not only of pelts and routes but also of matters to do with those men and women who lived in the great wilderness that is no more.

One evening several years ago Bill Hotchkiss pulled off the road at the top of Beckwourth Pass in California and climbed

the rest of the distance to the summit, where he found a small monument to the man. Placing his hands on the pointed stone, Hotchkiss says he "... knew, in the manner of creative intuition, that the next few years ..." would be spent working with Beckwourth's life. But he felt unable to tell the whole story in a single book. Two more volumes will complete Hotchkiss's Beckwourth trilogy. (AP) □

WASTE OF MONEY

A Socialist's Good Intentions

Michael Harrington: *The Next America: The Decline and Rise of the United States*; Holt, Rinehart & Winston; New York.

by Becki Klute

Michael Harrington claims in his introduction to this coffee-table volume to agree with President Reagan when the President speaks "of the old verities, of work, family, neighborhood and peace. . . . As a committed socialist I could not agree more with this conservative premise." Harrington admits that perhaps the great "liberations" of the 60's and 70's have had a less than salutary effect on the American society. But beyond these concerns and assertions, his rhetoric becomes coyly oxymoronic:

The disorder I encountered in the Greenwich Village of 1949 had been orderly. The drinking, the flouting of established sexual mores and the breaking of literary and artistic rules were all part of a serious, often joy-

ous, commitment to anti-values. Our 'immorality' was thus a morality in disguise.

Does it follow, according to this gospel, that a serious commitment to dishonesty is honesty, or that adultery is fidelity in disguise? Mr. Harrington refrains from philosophical elucidation in these matters.

On the subjects of social justice and economics, Mr. Harrington agrees that the New Deal/liberal policies have not produced the Valhalla that was expected from them. In this he stands arm in arm with Reagan and the conservatives of the 1980's. But "conservatism is impossible," he says. His solution would be a call for *more* central economic planning, social welfare, bureaucratic direction, since "there is no bureaucrat . . . which ever behaved as foolishly as the executives of the American auto, steel and rail industries." Because of what he sees as the venality, incompetence, greed and utter stupidity of the private sector, we as a nation must move even further to the left than FDR and the

New Deal, as far from FDR as FDR was from Herbert Hoover. Mr. Harrington's vision involves a total overturning of our economic structure:

By that I mean that the fundamental decisions now made by giant corporations about what to produce and where to produce it and whom to hire and what price to charge and what needs to meet must involve the actual producers, the affected communities and the political system, from the neighborhood on up to the nation as a whole and ultimately to global institutions. That would not yet be socialism since it envisions only a partial democratization of economic power . . .

Do we call an employee assembly whenever a job vacancy arises? More important, if experienced corporate executives have failed to manage their enterprises correctly (cases in point being Chrysler, Penn Central, etc.), would an aggregate of men and women devoid of training in marketing, management, investment, etc. be *more* capable of responsible administrative decision-making? And how, pray tell, would we involve in these decisions "the nation as a whole," not to mention "global institutions"? (If the U.N. and its various subsidiaries are examples of what Mr. Harrington

considers "global institutions" that should participate in *our* "fundamental decisions," we shudder at the prospect.)

The key word of the above paragraph is "responsible." Mr. Harrington pays meager lip service to the concept early in his book, then wipes it from his memory. Never again does the notion that an individual is, in any way, responsible for any part of his own destiny enter into the discussion. For Harrington, as for most socialists, the system alone is to blame for whatever ails us. That's not news, of course. But Harrington has been touted as "a leading political thinker for over thirty years." People read his books, listen to his speeches. When a "leading thinker" claims that "80 percent or so of the population" does not share the Christian definition of morality, it is quite possible that 80 percent or so of his listeners will accept that unsubstantiated claim as fact. Blacks will nod in apathetic agreement when Harrington declares that their many problems will see little change "unless American politics turns a sharp corner." Is American politics responsible for *all* the difficulties experienced by blacks?

Michael Harrington deeply and genuinely cares for his country, which can hardly be said for most Marxists, communists or socialists. He seems to be a basically decent man, one who sincerely wishes to correct the miseries and injustices inherent in the human condition. But he fails to pursue the problems to their sources, or his solutions to their finish. And this makes him a sort of danger to our society as a whole: when one who is not a "leading thinker" swallows these simplistic theories he is likely to vote for politicians who also espouse them, and we will then make another left turn down that road which is paved with good intentions. □



Mrs. Klute is on the editorial staff of the Chronicles.

O, What a Lovely Revolution! or Springtime for Lenin

Man of Iron; Written and directed by Andrzej Wajda; United Artists Classics.

Reds; Written by Warren Beatty and Trevor Griffiths; Directed by Warren Beatty; Paramount Pictures.

by Eric Shapearo

Man of Iron is both flawed and monumental, deficient and outstanding, disorderly and memorable. Its script is uneven and often sloppy, yet awe-inspiring in its breadth and integrity. The story line is fuzzy and shallow, but its simple force, its ability to extract emotions, is overpowering. Its characters are unfinished, wooden, stereotypic, but they are endowed with an inexplicable warmth. Its central figure, a venal, shoddy journalist, is supposed to personify man's frailty and paltriness which, in the clutches of the modern, totalitarian, communist power machine, have become even more repulsive, helpless and vicious. Yet the writers who drew this personage lack Graham Greene's sense for fine-tuning the transformation of human weakness into moral dignity. The two protagonists—the young worker and his wife, who comes from the intelligentsia and joins him in his fight against communism's heinousness — are straight from the socialist-realist theory of creative arts and letters that originated with Zhdanov (on Stalin's orders).

Socialist realism, still the official cultural orthodoxy in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, East Germany, etc., is a doctrine which assumes that man and life should be explored and presented not according to the empirically verifiable truth, but according to the requirements of ideology—the Marxist-Leninist ideology, to be precise. Thus the prime concern of a socialist-realist novel, drama, painting or movie is a so-called “positive hero”—e.g. an alleged human being whose preponderant destiny in life is either to fight for or to build socialism. He or she, naturally, may occasionally make love or care for a kitten, but any other preoccupations, like the search for wisdom, musing on freedom, pursuits of ambition or succumbing to a nondescript sadness are rigidly prosecuted, eliminated, declared both antihuman and antistate. After almost 50 years of socialist realism, except for a handful of novels and movies, the general model

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by Adrian Speracino

An American goes to see Andrzej Wajda's *Man of Iron* to have his conceptions of good and evil confirmed; after all, this film features Solidarity's struggle against the communist overlords of Poland, with Soviet tanks lurking in the background. If one seeks moral edification, then surely Wajda supplies it.

But perverseness will have its way at times; as Wajda plays out his drama one begins to feel a nagging uneasiness. Can the contrast between the two antagonists really be this stark? Brawny workers with pure hearts and selfless motives confront policemen whose thuggishness recalls the characters in third-rate gangster movies. Idealistic intellectuals fight to escape the heavy hand of a repressive government. Somehow this sounds familiar. Then the flash of recognition: Wajda springs straight from the prolecult socialist realism of the 1930's. Mike Gold and the fellow travelers of the Federal Theater Project would have loved him. Does Wajda expect us to embrace an aesthetic that

finds sublimity in the artistic possibilities inherent in the theme of boy meets tractor?

With considerable smugness, then, one pigeonholes *Man of Iron*; Wajda has simply reached into his bag, pulled out a handful of clichés and mixed them together according to a recipe in the cookbook of socialist aesthetics. But who is guilty now of oversimplification? Thinking only of those American leftists who assail our own government, we forget that *Man of Iron* depicts people who risk their lives to oppose a brutal communist regime. Wajda portrays intellectuals who battle for basic human freedoms, not their spoiled counterparts who gather at writers' congresses to denounce the world's freest nation. The Polish workers who appear in the film bear no resemblance to the greedy malcontents of PATCO. In this case, socialist realism actually works. Wajda and Solidarity need to draw the line clearly between good and evil and to heighten the contrast between the two. In present-day Poland such a division between good guys and bad guys clearly coincides with reality.

Having conquered the urge to dismiss *Man of Iron* as nothing more than an exercise in prolecult, one faces another problem. The people in this film sound suspiciously like *socialists*, and their talk about democracy verges dangerously close to the egalitarianism preached by the most extreme of American leftists. What are individualistic Americans to do with this? They can begin by realizing that our neat little division between capitalism and socialism falls apart when we try to impose it on the situation in Poland. Perhaps we can console ourselves by insisting that Solidarity's leaders bandy the catchwords of socialism simply to buy time from the Soviets. This contains an element of truth, but on a deeper level the leaders of the Polish rebellion know that improvements in Poland must come

through alterations within the existing socialist system. Can we realistically expect the characters in *Man of Iron* to extol the glories of free-market capitalism?

The rejection of communist totalitarianism, not the adoption of capitalism, is the crucial issue at stake in Poland. The Polish workers know this: they have pitched their fight in the realm of the spirit, not in the arena of competing economic systems. To fail to recognize this momentous fact leads one into the same trap that imprisons Marxists: philosophical—and practical—materialism. *Man of Iron* reminds one that in Poland freedom and tyranny are locked in a combat that may well determine the configuration of the world in which our heirs will dwell. With this much at stake, one had best not be disconcerted by the egalitarian and socialist rhetoric of Wajda's characters. Solidarity fights our fight.

* * *

Until fairly recently the American left's Homeric Age—the era of great myths and legends with which to shape a people's consciousness—lay in the 1930's. The eyes of aging radicals would grow misty as they recalled a decade filled with labor strife, agitprop theater and socialist-realist art. The decade of the 30's was the Golden Age, the time when radical aspirations hovered within reach and the Soviet Union shouldered her way past the tired Western democracies as she strode toward the future.

The young radicals of the 1960's rejected the older generation's myth of the 30's; they turned disdainfully away from the sclerotic old men and women who lived on the fading memories of sectarian squabbles. And who could get excited over a dreary and spiritless Soviet Union that had leached the Bolshevik Revolution of its inner vitality and left a hollow bureaucratic shell in its stead?

But the American left *will* have its

myths, so in the 1970's the dream machine went to work on the creation of a new Golden Age. Out of this effort emerged the current love affair with an era bounded in time by the years 1912 and 1917 and focused geographically on Greenwich Village. There was a time and place tailor-made to capture the fancies of today's radicals. With Max Eastman as the impresario, young men and women from the hinterlands transformed the Village into a three-ring circus of free love, birth control, feminism, pacifism, artistic experimentation and a socialism that owed more to Freud's sexual preoccupations and Henri Bergson's *élan vital* than to the turgid treatises of Karl Marx. The Village habitués discovered that socialism could be fun. One could labor on one's novel in the morning, dash off an article for *The Masses* in the afternoon, drop by Mabel Dodge's salon in the evening to hear Big Bill Haywood hold forth, argue radical politics in a Village bistro until the early hours of the morning and then stumble home arm-in-arm with the lover of one's choice. Perhaps the greatest source of satisfaction lay in knowing how shocked the folks back home in Des Moines would be. Rarely has playing at revolution comported so well with the hedonistic longings of the young.

Warren Beatty's *Reds* adds to the growing mythology of the Greenwich Village radicals by giving the left a certified saint in John Reed, that glamorous former cheerleader from Harvard who reveled in the rapturous delights of the prewar Village. Why a saint? Well, Jack Reed sacrificed his life for the Bolshevik cause, a cause suffused with high spirits in those heady days, and he died young, thus sparing himself and his worshipers from seeing the enthusiasms of boyhood founder on the shoals of old age. Jack could remain ever-young and ever-attached to the glorious upsurge of revolutionary fervor. Had Jack Reed not existed, someone would have had to create him.

Reds is a *tour de force* in radical myth-making. No one really wants to wade through *Das Kapital*, nor to attend those stodgy socialist meetings nor to mingle with all those drab workers. But what unmitigated joy to see *Reds*. It encapsulates all one's fantasies about sexual freedom, youthful vitality and revolutionary romance. What adolescent radical heart would not throb when Warren Beatty makes love to Diane Keaton as the strains of the *Internationale* float through their room in Petrograd? □

On the day that Polish security troops—called by the Poles in the streets “Gestapo,” “SS,” “KGB”—butchered the miners in Silesia by tossing explosives into shafts occupied by Solidarity supporters, and while Polish intellectuals died of alleged “heart attacks” in concentration camps set up by General Jaruzelski's junta, the New York Film Critics Circle voted *Reds* the American film of 1981. The fact that John Reed, American communist and ardent promoter of the Russian revolution who is glorified in the movie as precisely that, was *somehow*, at least in part, responsible for what was happening to the Poles (just as he was partially responsible for what had happened before to the 20,000,000 Russians who perished in the Gulags, the Hungarians who were slaughtered in 1956, the Czechs who were massacred in 1968) *somehow* did not influence the critics' selection. Movie critics, one must remember, are those upright and enlightened people who tell Americans which movies are worth seeing, liking or disliking. They help form popular American tastes and they launch cultural trends of rejection or acceptance. Most movie critics are staunchly liberal, and they claim to care about the value of the cinematic art above all else. □

Man of Iron

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of Soviet literature is structured on a "boy-meets-tractor" pattern. Certainly a few magnificent works of drama and literature have originated in the socialist philosophy—one recalls *And Quiet Flows the Don* or, in the movies, *Patomkin*. The magnitude of *Man of Iron* is that it is the first socialist-realist movie to carry a clear, fierce, unequivocal and fully intentional anti-socialist message. Its main protagonist is a flesh-and-blood worker, a true-blue proletarian who pays little attention to life's enigmas and ambiguities, who loves his wife and child and who, with a superb, heroic, single-minded passion, devotes his life to the destruction of communism in Poland. An intricate lesson about socialist realism must therefore be drawn from Andrzej Wajda's film: for the last 30 years the critics, from right or left, who have scoffed at, derided and scorned all the ridiculous socialist-realist sagas, be they Soviet, Czech, French, Italian or Latin American, have been missing the point. Those socialist-realist "masterpieces" were stupid, clumsy and repellent because they defended the wrong cause—the totalitarian lie, oppression, knavery, Soviet-style despotism and corruption. When the revolution was a just cause, or at least a cause related to justice—like overthrowing the czar—Eisenstein could make a convincing cinematic statement, like *Patomkin*. But the revolution quickly degenerated into the worst tyranny in history—and here comes Wajda, who gives a pictorial testimony for a revolution against Eisenstein's revolution. Wajda's cause is just, and *Man of Iron* is a splendid, triumphant socialist realism which leaves no one unmoved—and thus metes out a terrific blow to the Marxist-Leninist evil.

The American liberal leftist—whose tepid denunciations of the Soviet reality, power and historical role have always sounded unconvincing—will have a hard

time watching this movie. The screen is replete with paraphernalia dear to the heart of every fellow traveler and "progressive": shipyards, plants, authentic working men and women, unfalsified people, poor-looking lower classes, machines, slogans on the walls, meetings, soap-box rhetoric in the genuine unionist style, an avalanche of proletarian aesthetics. Not for a second does Wajda allow the viewer to forget that this working-class universe and ethos is animated by one mighty impulse: to destroy communism, to wage a life-or-death struggle with the Polish commissars who ruined Poland in the name of Marx and Lenin and on behalf of the Soviets. Nor does Wajda let the audience forget that the fighting labor union goes into battle carrying Catholic symbols and singing hymns to the glory of the Virgin Mary. This movie will certainly discomfort all those Ivy League professors who still keep *Das Kapital* and the works of George Lukacs on the shelves, all those Park Avenue leftists who still have Che Guevara murals in their penthouses, the Hollywood progressivists who make millions on pornography only to finance the Institute for Policy Studies, and the tycoons of the cosmetic industry who are ever-ready to contribute to the Weather Underground or the Red Brigades' lunch program or the maintenance of traitors like Philip Agee. Perhaps they should spare themselves indigestion by staying away.

* * *

Art cannot be art, and literature cannot be literature, without a modicum of moral truth. In a work of art, *any* sin can be defended and *any* inhumanity forgiven, but only when the painstaking observance of truthfulness opens new vistas to any kind of human experience and circumstances. Ultimately an unswerving allegiance to reality and verity is transformed into deep knowledge through a dazzling mind, fascinating intelligence, awesome insightfulness—which tells us that to divorce

truth from the rudiments of intellectual ethics will always end in either mediocrity or a rapacious swindle. That's why dimwits are such poor subjects for art and literature, and why great writers are always, first and foremost, very intelligent men and women. Without the magic of moral truth, art becomes only entertainment and literature mere writing.

There is little intimation in *Reds*, which was made around the end of the 1970's, of that which is depicted in *Man of Iron*—that is, the total subjugation of a society to a monstrous communist tyranny whose most miserable victims are the workers. The creators of *Reds* must have heard about Stalin's slaughter of 20,000,000 people, of the Gulags' horrors, of the brutal conquest of Eastern Europe, of Budapest and Prague. Yet in their movie, only Emma Goldman—an anarchist whose reputation was due less to her brain than to her ability to channel frustrated sexuality into revolutionary fierceness—utters a few trite warnings about the fickle nature of revolution. Actually, she was condemning neither communist doctrine nor its historical implementation, but the *Russian* mess. After 60 years of leftist intellectual efforts to render justice to Marxism, Leninism and their historical embodiments—after André Gide, Koestler, Silone, Orwell, Solzhenitsyn—all the "creators" of *Reds* can come up with by way of analysis is an intolerable banality which, by the time of Lenin's death, was already considered shabby, worn out, old hat. This, of course, reduces the movie's illuminative value to that of a sociopolitical cinematic comic strip.

When *Doctor Zhivago* was first shown behind what we used to call the Iron Curtain, its most lyrical, or dramatic, moments triggered waves of laughter from audiences that knew Russia, Russians and the Russian communist reality by virtue of their proximity to it, the condition of being neighbors. No less hilarity certainly must have

erupted among the Russians who saw the movie. Yet *Zhivago*, even in its Western version, at least succeeded in conveying Boris Pasternak's knowledge and sense of evil, which exuded even from the cosmeticized Hollywood rendition of the revolution. *Reds*, in which comrade Zinoviev looks like an English bookie from the 1930's, and revolutionary soldiers, with a change of costume, could fit into a production of *Oklahoma*, is dismally inauthentic. Any genuineness is limited to the American scenes, and even those have a rather warped effect. Looking at *Reds*' depiction of the Greenwich Village radical bohemian coterie, one has a comforting feeling that their moral legacy has resulted not in any serious intellectual asset but in the *Vogue-Women's Wear Daily* crowd, in the "world view" from Central Park West penthouses. Would not Edna St. Vincent Millay and Mabel Dodge qualify today as purveyors of sex manuals? But is this the whole truth about American radical liberalism and leftist sentiments? Did not Max Eastman* die a hard-bitten conservative? From this perspective, John Reed looks like a doleful clown who mismanages his penchants for tweed jackets and Shetland pullovers—a possible subject for an ironic movie or a bitter-wise short story, but not the material for any valuable model of human existence and endeavor.

Still, this is how *Reds* tries to enshrine him. The movie's shallow, prefabricated intellectual stereotypicality does not make it necessarily procommunist. But it is an archetypal liberal movie, and as such—all indignant protests notwithstanding—it becomes a procommunist propaganda movie by dint of its misguided intentions, its feeble-minded cognition and purpose—an agitprop piece by proxy. Here is Reed, glamor boy of

American communism, personified as the embodiment of charm, sensitivity, tender sophistication, blue-ribbon liberal sentiment, the choicest social virtues and graces. Here is a woman, Louise Bryant (played by the most modish actress of the last decade), who is loved by both John Reed, the radical prodigy, and Eugene O'Neill, one of America's greatest playwrights. She sumptuously flourishes all the "in" liberationist-revolutionary gabble of a radical-chic pro-grape-pickers cocktail party. Why these two men on the screen are so profoundly in love with this vestige of WASPish good looks from the covered-wagon era, now covered with a mountainous layer of *maquillage* (even amidst the deprivations of revolutionary Petrograd), is not too clear. She continuously spouts feminist slogans, not those enhanced with the stylish suffragettes' freshness of the portrayed epoch, but in the stale lingo of *Ms.* magazine platitudes that are as repulsive as they are anachronistic. At one point she lashes out at Eugene O'Neill, accusing him of barren cynicism as compared to Reed's *engagé* attitude of a social idealist. It's hard to stomach this lowbrow liberal posturing; after all, Reed's idealism helped to create Gulags and Soviet imperialism, while O'Neill produced a body of writing which is the pride of

American literature. What she is actually ranting against is human intelligence and talent—which might prove false her liberal ethos that condones the sacrifice of rationality on the altar of the cause. Her intellectual "victory" over the Senate investigating committee therefore becomes a grim verbal slapstick.

Yes, it is an ultraliberal movie, and the mafia of liberal critics—from the *New York Times* to *Mademoiselle*—has gone to work to establish it as this season's "masterpiece" and "stunning achievement." The reception and response was indeed stupefying, but it was certainly assured for a movie that romanticizes and glamorizes the "revolutionary dream." The liberal critics make no connection between Reed's activities and the history of enslavement and martyrdom of the human masses from Vladivostok to the Elbe. The dimwitted liberal apologist at the *Times* wrote that *Reds* "dramatizes in a way that no other commercial movie in my memory has ever done—the excitement of being young, idealistic and foolish in a time when everything still seemed possible." We wonder if he would write the same words about a movie "dramatizing" Horst Wessel—the early "martyr" of the Nazi movement—who, in point of fact, was also "young, idealistic and

We are Mr. Reagan's supporters, even admirers. Still, we are occasionally appalled at his lapses of judgment and taste. We've read that he endorsed a White House screening of *Reds*, a movie about John Reed, the only American who helped to establish the Gulag empire and, even worse, its cult following among the American liberal intelligentsia. For this service Mr. Reed was elevated to communist sainthood and is entombed in the Kremlin cemetery. President Reagan found it fit to publicize the movie as an "event" and invited to the White House Mr. Warren Beatty, director and producer of *Reds* and wealthy worshiper of various shady leftist causes.

The same daily paper brought us the news that Burt Reynolds is the most admired personage among American teen-agers, ranking far above any American statesman, scientist, social activist, philosopher or intellectual. By legitimizing, even honoring, Mr. Beatty (who plays the part of John Reed) and his specious movie with a White House accolade, Mr. Reagan, perhaps inadvertently, has cultivated a miserable and harmful mishmash in the minds of average, youthful Americans. They will see the picture and say to themselves: "Gee, President Reagan liked that Beatty/Reed. He's handsome and well dressed and quite a stud and he apparently liked communism. Shouldn't we too?" □

*Eastman epitomizes the movie's cheap mendacity. Actually, he was the handsomest "scorer" in the then sexually emancipated set, much more attractive than John Reed; in the film, he looks and behaves like an overfed bookworm.

foolish." It seems to us, however, that anyone who was instrumental in erecting either Auschwitz or Kolyma ultimately amounts to the same historical and moral worth.

To the left-liberal critics who populate the cultural sections of the media, *Reds* is an El Dorado of cherished, if specious, homilies: revolution is God's gift (dragged through the mud by careerists and bureaucrats); those who dream of social paradises are angels (those who ask questions about them are bastards or business executives); social idealists are immaculate heroes of mind and conscience (never arrogant blockheads who refuse to analyze facts or consider any critical reasoning). The founders of the Communist Party USA, whatever their crimes (of which we are now well aware),

appear on the wide screen as proletarian versions of Norman Rockwell's "Decent American"—well-scrubbed, well-intentioned, with no sign of the fanaticism and hatred with which they were imbued in real life. *Reds* is featured in neighborhood movie theaters, which sends the entire American elite corps of liberal critics into ecstasy. Not a single one of all the liberal mavens has noticed that the last words of John Reed—on his deathbed in a Soviet hospital—were "I want to go home . . ." After his short and wretched life as a propagandist of evil, it apparently had dawned on him that perhaps something better could be found in his own despised country of brutal, strike-breaking policemen, of the obtuse and hypocritical bourgeoisie, of greedy, exploitative capitalism. □

the most accomplished and successful soloists, arrangers and leaders of modern jazz were given their first breaks by Stan Kenton. His greatest contribution to music was unquestionably his ability to spot talent and allow it to flourish in the creative environment of his orchestra. Radiating from these pages with an intensity far more compelling than the aggregate of information is the admiration of his musicians. Even those who question the value of his musical philosophy are lavish in their praise of Kenton as a leader and father figure.

What is missing from the book is fulfillment of the true biographer's duty—to put his subject in perspective. It remains for someone else to assess Kenton's impact on the jazz idiom, to critically sort out his solid musical accomplishments from his bombast, to investigate the social and cultural phenomena that surrounded Kenton's astoundingly rapid elevation to popular success in the 1940's. Dr. Lee's effort will be helpful in the task. In the meantime, except for the extremely patient and knowledgeable reader, more insight into Kenton's music will be gained from his recordings than from this well-intentioned but ungainly work.

Stanley Dance's volume on the protean band leader, Count Basie, also consists of reminiscences and previously published material. But Dance, one of the great authorities on mainstream jazz, uses logical organization and his own solid evaluations to make the book readable and to place Basie in perspective.

Dance's passages on the components of the Basie piano style and the evolution of the rhythmic aspects of jazz in Kansas City are helpful in understanding why the band was so unexpectedly successful when it reached New York in 1936. He explains why the rhythm section was the heart of the organization, how Basie's deceptively spare piano style drove the section, and why Basie's wisdom in the selection of tempos accounted in great part for the band's un-

MUSIC

Large Congregations

William F. Lee: *Stan Kenton: Artistry In Rhythm*; Creative Press; Los Angeles.

Stanley Dance: *The World of Count Basie*; Charles Scribner's Sons; New York.

By Doug Ramsey

Dr. Lee's 727-page mélange, part fan letter and part scrapbook, will be invaluable to researchers into the phenomenon of the late Stan Kenton and his impact on jazz in the 1940's, 50's and 60's. The scholars will have to sift through masses of anecdotes and hundreds of press notices from publications as diverse as the *Landsdale, Pennsylvania North Penn Reporter* and the *London Times*. They may suffer, but they will come away with useful material.

Mr. Ramsey is a noted jazz critic.

It is questionable whether the general reader, regardless of his devotion to Kenton, will have the patience for the task. Between the covers Dr. Lee has intermingled verbatim reminiscences from Kenton's relatives, friends and colleagues with four decades of newspaper and magazine articles and reviews. Strung together on a meager chronological narrative, all this raw source material is almost indigestible as continuous reading.

As a reference work, however, the volume is important. The index is comprehensive and accurate. The discography is complete, although it does not include recording-session personnel, a serious oversight. There is a personnel listing by instrument, but it is alphabetical. It is also astonishing—over the years, 130 trumpet players worked for Kenton, 72 tenor saxophonists, 32 drummers. The band was a vast training ground for jazz musicians. Some of

equaled relaxation and power.

Like Kenton, Basie had an ability to hear greatness in young, relatively unknown players and, like Kenton's, his band was a hothouse for new talent. Foremost among his protégés was Lester Young, the tenor saxophonist who carried jazz improvisation a step beyond Louis Armstrong and Coleman Hawkins. Dance's chapter on Young makes one understand why he needed the loose power of Basie's band to support him as he scaled new heights in his development of the jazz solo.

Recollections by articulate Basie associates like bassist Gene Ramey and drummer Gus Johnson recreate the Kansas City musical milieu of the 1930's, one of the yeastiest times and places in the history of American music. Ramey's long narrative gives insights not only into the inner workings of Basie's band in Kansas City but also into the stylistic link between Lester Young

and alto saxophonist Charlie Parker. Young and Parker, revolutionaries of successive jazz eras, were two of the most important soloists to emerge from Kansas City.

Basie was able to survive the winds of change that Parker and others blew through jazz in the bebop era. Dance tells how the band was allowed to absorb the principles of bop soloing, but never permitted to substitute bop's complex rhythmic aspects for the smooth, unified swing that underlay Basie's success. Basie is still at the helm of his band 45 years after it left Kansas City, evidence that his belief in his concept of music was amply justified.

A definitive biography of Count Basie is yet to come. Nonetheless, Dance's book is still of value in explicating the phenomenon of the Basie band and its importance to the development of American music. □

Records: Symphonic Impressionism and Other Goodies

by Robert R. Reilly

Quick, try to think of a French symphonist. Bizet, Frank, Dukas, maybe Berlioz? Not quite. Each wrote only one symphony. Other French composers who come to mind—Debussy, Ravel, Poulenc, Satie—did not even try. The French do not seem to have found the symphony as congenial a form as their Germanic neighbors have. One exception was Albert Roussel (1869-1937), whose four ventures into the symphonic realm turned out at least two masterpieces (No.'s 3 and 4). An earlier work, "Evocations" Op. 15, as its title suggests, is derivative of Debussy's impressionism (which Roussel would later abandon for

the rigor and vigor of classicism). Yet there is nothing immature about this work. It is an engaging depiction of (though I would never guess it without reading the titles) Roussel's impressions of India: the monumental Hindu deities



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in cave temples, the ruins of Jaipur and the holy river. The latter is accompanied by soloists and chorus. If you like impressionism you will love this music. There are signs of the later Roussel in it that will intrigue those who are familiar only with his postimpressionist works. "Evocations" is given an exciting performance by the Czech Philharmonic under Zdenek Kosler. The only thing that disappoints in this highly recommendable release is Supraphon's annoyingly scratchy record surfaces (Supraphon 112 2454).

David Diamond, born in 1915, is a productive American symphonist with eight works in that genre to his credit. But who would know it? He has eschewed atonality ("I do not believe there is any such thing as atonal music"), aleatory devices and other avant-garde trappings. Instead he has had the nerve to assert that the artist's job is to compose "music that can uplift the spirits. . . . Music that does not nourish you spiritually is not music, only aural sensations." As a result he, like any number of non-conformist traditionalists, has found himself outside the purview of the musical establishment. None of his symphonies has been recently available in a recording. Thanks to New World Records (NW 258) Diamond's "Symphony No. 4" can now be heard in a lively, moving performance by the New York Philharmonic under Leonard Bernstein. It is a resurrection of a 1958 Columbia recording, but the sound remains very good. The music has immediate appeal, is unmistakably American, touching and exuberant. This record is worthy for Diamond's symphony alone, but Side Two offers a bonus—Peter Mennin's "Symphony No. 7" (1904). Mennin is also a formidable American symphonist, having completed the magic number of nine works in that form. He composes tonal music and has made such reactionary remarks as: "Music reflects the soul of the composer and there *is* such a thing as the soul." However, any further comparison to Diamond ends here. Mennin's music

has little surface attraction; it is stark and demanding. It reminds one of modern Scandinavian music, but without its lyrical relief. "In my work there has always been some evidence of violence," says Mennin, "and the element of contrast. Here they come out with a vengeance." A fair description of a turbulent, highly dramatic work. This is also a resurrected recording (from 1967), originally made by RCA. Jean Martinon and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra give a blazing performance.

Phillip Rhodes is a young composer who has written extensively for voice. His "Visions of Remembrance" makes one eager to hear his other works, especially something as ambitious as "Paradise Lost," which is available from Louisville Records. "Visions" is something quite lovely and unexpected: a contemporary work that is kind to the voice: none of the ululations or screaming melismas of what passes for modern vocal music. Because of its lyricism, it has invited comparison with Samuel Barber's "Knoxville: Summer of 1915," but "Visions" lacks the dramatic build and coherence that the single text from

James Agee gives Barber's work. Rhodes uses for his text four poems by Douglas Worth, his 12-year-old daughter Anna Jean, Hart Crane and D. H. Lawrence. According to Rhodes, this work "is based on the general theme of reminiscence, but especially on that hazy aura in which the mind seems to cloak long remembered persons and events. . . . Visions is about the circles of time and the flow of generations, and in that context, the things that change and those things that always stay the same." It does create that "hazy aura," a kind of gauze through which the past is regarded; it provides the distance of time and memory, and therefore the poignancy of the past—a musical *recherche du temps perdu*.

The voice of soprano Carol Wilson and mezzo-soprano Lorraine Manz interweave mellifluously, accompanied by the Carleton Contemporary Ensemble, directed by William Wells. "Visions of Remembrance," issued by Composers Recordings (CRI-426), is recommended to anyone interested in modern vocal music, particularly to anyone whose previous experience of it has been only one of cacophony. □

ads for enterprises whose strangulation they advocate remains a question to be answered by a multitude of corporate publicity departments. The more simple-minded among business executives would answer that it is because those press outlets have an audience, a mostly well-heeled youthful audience, and that they help to sell their products, thus performing a service to the growth of capitalism as embodied by their own businesses. More perverse corporate theorists would claim that by making *Mother Jones* or *Rolling Stone* a thriving business they are subverting it and aligning it with the system, but these theorists forget that by their financial support they are enabling the survival of a more sophisticated and therefore infinitely more dangerous anticapitalistic idea. What seems alien to the corporate mind, however, is that according to history ideas always, in the end, will defeat mere aggregates of money, offices, machines and plush headquarters—whether such a compound is called a state or a corporate enterprise. This is a lesson that will be absorbed into the corporate mentality sooner or later, but by then it may be too late.

But something even more fascinating than the rope syndrome has passed unobserved and unmentioned in our historical theater of the absurd. The *New York Times Magazine* recently ran a story on Mr. Armand Hammer, a celebrated industrialist, tycoon, art collector and philanthropist who, for the last half-century, has been best known as a go-between for the rulers of the Kremlin and American Presidents. The *NYT* article, written by an honest social commentator, Mr. Edward Jay Epstein, is rather fair in its assessment of Mr. Hammer. It correctly points out that all missions of good will and mediation undertaken by Mr. Hammer on behalf of peace and understanding between the U.S.S.R. and us have always ended with his own fabulous enrichment and aggrandizement. Yet the article does not answer two crucial questions that every intelligent mind would ask after

THE AMERICAN PROSCENIUM

Capitalism & the Rope

Everybody knows Lenin's old, over-used, already-stale dictum about the rope that capitalists, mentally debilitated by their own greed, would sell the communists to use for their own hanging. For decades, it has symbolized and synthesized the suicidal vector of capitalism which is predetermined to arrange its own death by the very logic of its inherent characteristics.

No one denies, now, the wisdom and insightfulness of Lenin's prophetic *bon*

mot. Capitalism in America has developed some interesting forms of coexistence, even cooperation, with certain sociocultural forces, a cooperation which has brought the rope adage to an enigmatic stage of refinement. Why would large corporations advertise lavishly in press organs which openly and intelligently promote capitalism's demise (they even admit that they do it by using purely capitalistic methods of marketing their ideas in order to make them more effective)? Why *Mother Jones* and *Rolling Stone* are awash with

reading it:

—Is Mr. Hammer a decent and well-intentioned American, or is he an influential rat to whom the notion of allegiance to moral principle is meaningless?

—Whom does Mr. Hammer serve: America, the communists or just himself?

Many of Mr. Hammer's supporters, admirers or analysts might conclude, with skeptical sagacity, that these questions are beside the point, that life is ruled by ambivalence, that a true citizen of the world must always deal with nuances of reality and goodness whose appearances are undefinable and unpredictable. At this point, an old Jewish joke comes to mind: two quarrelling men go to a rabbi to solve a bitter dispute. The rabbi listens to one and says: "You're right." Then the adversary gets a hearing and the rabbi says: "You're right." Upon which, the rabbi's assistant says: "Rabbi, here you have two men whose arguments are at extreme odds; it's impossible that they both are right, isn't it?" The rabbi thinks for a while and says: "You know what? You're right, too."

We have our own, perhaps third, answer to the Hammer enigma. He is not an isolated phenomenon. Apparently, at a certain juncture Lenin and his successors conceived of even a better scheme than buying the good, reliable, capitalist rope. They decided to form their own capitalist ministratum within the most formidable stronghold of capitalism. The *NYT* article mentions, but does not analyze in detail, the origins of Mr. Hammer's fortune, a family fortune founded by his father, a successful Russian immigrant who apparently never abandoned his deep ideological allegiance to Lenin's communism. He didn't need to be a Party member, he just worshipped at the altar of Marxism, while at the same time organizing capitalist enterprises which would

serve the cause of revolution. The victorious revolution in Russia did not leave him to face the hazards of the capitalist economy alone—by extending unusual business rights and concessions in the import/export trade, the workers' paradise provided him with solid investment opportunities and a capital-forming base. Having all possible opportunities to profit from capitalism with the assistance of Soviet capital infusion, his son, Mr. Armand Hammer, worked his way to the attention of Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Truman, Kennedy and Ford. Hammer's strategy is certainly not unique. Mr. Samuel Rubin, the giant of the American cosmetic industry and founder of the Fabergé conglomerate, is said to have been an ardent devotee of Stalin. We do not know whether he received any cash infusion from Amtorg or other agencies of the Commissariat for Foreign Trade to build his capitalistic empire, but we do know that a good portion of his millions went into ventures like the Institute for Policy Studies—an institution not exactly dedicated to the prosperity of American capitalism, oriented instead toward the promulgation of capitalism's

cruel suppression.

We do not have unequivocal replies to the questions we ourselves have posed concerning Mr. Hammer's inner mysteries. All we can rely on is a segment from Mr. Epstein's text in the *New York Times Magazine* which seems to us particularly illuminating:

Throughout this global odyssey, it quickly became clear how in all his dealings, commerce, diplomacy, politics, philanthropy, friendship and his own self-interest interweave in complex patterns. A vivid illustration is his recent personal peace initiative in Afghanistan. The idea, which he claims had been suggested to him by Edward Gierak, then the head of the Communist Party in Poland, was for the Soviet Union to begin a phased withdrawal of its troops from Afghanistan in return for which Pakistan and the United States would agree to stop aiding the anti-Soviet rebels in Afghanistan.

In Moscow, Hammer arranged a private meeting with Brezhnev. Brezhnev explained, according to Hammer's recollection, that it was 'utter nonsense' that the Soviet Union had

LIBERAL CULTURE

The Woes of Tender Souls

The Columbus Dispatch of Columbus, Ohio quotes Peter Criss, formerly



of the rock group Kiss, on the miseries of rock musicians while on tour:

I used to pull stunts like throwing televisions into hotel pools, but not just for the fun of it. Once you've been out on the road for 200 straight days you really learn the limits of human frustration, and you go beyond the normal limits to get rid of it . . .

The Kiss rock group designed the last two letters of its name to resemble the nazi SS emblem. Hitlerian henchmen complained, at one time, that murdering people in concentration camps made them bored and tired. The difference, of course, is that Kiss never indulged in such things—they just collected millions of dollars on the road. □

any strategic designs on the Persian Gulf region, and that he would order the withdrawal of *some* Soviet units in Afghanistan as soon as the arms traffic across the Pakistan border to Afghan rebels was ended. (Emphasis added)

In essence, this says that the solution in Afghanistan of which Mr. Hammer would be fond, which he would consider his contribution to world peace, would be for Brezhnev to withdraw *some* of his troops, while the West would terminate *all* help to the Afghan freedom fighters. Their resistance would then be easily suppressed by the remaining Soviet troops. This Mr. Ham-

mer apparently considers his mission of peace. Who would *this* kind of peace serve best? And what about the Afghan people? This evidently does not bother Mr. Hammer or make any impact on his conscience. Has he ever asked himself how his activities help Russian dissidents, or enslaved Eastern Europeans? We see no sign that he has. All we know is that he was a friend of Russian leaders from Lenin to Brezhnev, and that he owns the most impressive *private* collection of Russian art in existence. That is an image of the virtuous American capitalist whose actions *Pravda* glorifies as an example of impeccable cooperation between the two systems. (LT) □

the editor of *Center Journal* may overstate the case in contending "that this period of domination is coming to an end," one can at least agree that the launching of *This World* and *Center Journal* serves notice that the epigones of Walter Rauschenbusch will no longer be free to pass off their fuzzy speculations as the word of God. □

Archie Kristol

The *New York Times Magazine* ran, not long ago, a sizable feature on Professor Irving Kristol, the noted neo-conservative theorist and polemicist. Written by a certain Mr. Walter Goodman, the article epitomized the low-brow, quarter-intelligent, yellow-journalistic approach to the wave of conservative and neoconservative dialectics which has victoriously invaded the realm of the American intellectual discourse—for so long the exclusive fiefdom of liberal rhetoric and fashion. Mr. Goodman is apparently quite unaware of Professor Kristol's American antecedents in philosophy, history, the humanities in general; he seems to believe that he has tapped the source, rather than the end product, of some ideological tradition—a misconception that is a typical pitfall for an ignoramus. With the moralchutzpah of a punk liberal, Mr. Goodman uses the denomina-

JOURNALISM

Onward, Christian Soldiers!

Walter Rauschenbusch and his fellow Social Gospellers seized the realm of Christian public policy in the late 19th century for the left, and since that time liberal Protestants have claimed a special prerogative in determining the application of Christian ethics to public affairs. Those who rejected their formulations frequently responded to this sacerdotal imperialism by withdrawing into an imaginative apocalypticism or by consoling themselves with tirades against the barbarians within the gates. Neither sufficed to check the merry progress of the liberal clerics.

The appearance of two new quarterly journals—*This World* and *Center Journal*—indicates that those Christians not enamored with the liberal ethos have decided to fight fire with fire. *This World*, published by the Institute for Educational Affairs in association with the American Enterprise Institute, brings

together Roman Catholics, Protestants and Jews in an effort "to help all of us to be a little clearer about the real-world effects of moral and religious thinking." In sponsoring *Center Journal*, the Center for Christian Studies at Notre Dame, Indiana intends to provide an ecumenical voice to oppose the "liberalist/secularist partisans" who have run roughshod over the churches. Although

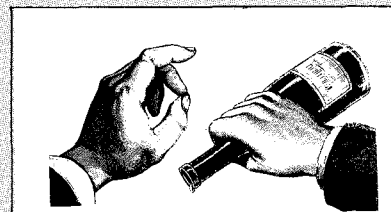
LIBERAL CULTURE

Nibbling the Hand that Feeds You

Professor John Kenneth Galbraith lectured on Reaganomics at the Magazine Publishers Association annual meeting in sunny Palm Springs:

You as publishers are in the brackets that will enjoy the tax cuts, but it is very hard to make incentives work for people paying a bit more for Rolls-Royces.

Perhaps worried about the status of his



honorarium, Dr. Galbraith thoughtfully added:

I know you're working hard and won't luxuriate in the tax breaks.

(RAV)

□

tion "liberal" as a synonym for all truth, wisdom and virtue, while anything nonliberal — like, for example, Professor Kristol's convictions—emerge from his pen as axiomatically tainted by sin, corruption, subservience to greed or intellectual banditry. In Mr. Goodman's eyes and polemical method, Professor Kristol does not defend free enterprise because he believes in its objective superiority; he is in "solidarity with business"—a better word, "cahoots," is obviously suggested.

When those shrewd peddlers of liberal progress in Hollywood created Archie Bunker as the paradigm of reactionary obscurantism and meanness, the quintessential caricature of a redneck, they soon discovered that, instead of responding with rejection and revulsion, Americans swelled up with warm affection and sympathy. Perhaps what the TV prophets of enlightenment perceived as abominable was not so horrendous after all. We hope that Mr. Goodman and the *New York Times* will, sooner or later, learn their lesson. □

Whoring in New York City

New York magazine devoted its entire December 28, 1981 issue to what it entitled "Single in the City." It was supposed to codify and synthesize everything that must be known about what *New York* readers are fond of calling their "lifestyle." We call it whoring. The magazine carefully elucidates when, where, how, with whom and in which way one may achieve the best possible results in unmoored, casual, chaotic, amorphous picking-up, scoring, coupling, mating, fornicating and copulating—from the first eye contact in a singles bar to the final morning ablution in whoever's bathroom. To us it looks like a cheap Baedeker to whoredom, as—according to the tradition of almost every civilization on earth—sexual activities that are ungrounded either in love or in passion or in very personal

motivation are tantamount to whoring. The young women described by *New York's* sympathetic writers give themselves not for money but for acceptance—a fashionable trend that was concocted by magazines of the *New York* stripe (in cahoots with modern psychoanalytical charlatanry and feminist ideological boorishness). Thus, regardless of the modish words used to define this "lifestyle," to us it is whoredom. □

Power to the Press Lords!

Lee Thornton, a CBS News correspondent, told the Women in Communications' National Professional Conference that "... we as journalists must constantly rededicate ourselves against serious moves to curb our power."

This is a precious statement. For the first time since the liberal media seized near-totalitarian power in America, one of their own has finally admitted that they did so. The official press party line usually clamors that they are powerless, eternal victims and prey of some unnamed powers that be which constantly try to abolish the First Amendment—the only civil right that guarantees democracy in America. They whine that any attempt "to curb" this power, regardless of its effect on our society and our lives, is wickedness and sin—according to the press lords, of course. Mr. Thornton, furthermore, defined the media's power as "freedom to find out what's going on." Unfortunately, in our

time it has become an unelected, unwished-for, superimposed power to dictate what will go on. We wish ardently for that time to come when that power *will* be curbed—for the sake of the freedom of people other than those on CBS's, etc., staff. □

The Business of Discretion

According to the latest national *Folio 400* survey, the top five newsstand sellers are *TV Guide*, *Women's Day*, *Family Circle*, *National Enquirer* and *Penthouse*. Reaching the top of newsstand sales does have its impediments, though. *Penthouse*, noted for its generous displays of female nooks and crannies, apparently does not sell well in certain corner newsstands where the owners do not provide customers with brown paper bags to conceal their purchases.

Why these owners practice such a cruel disservice to their customers, we do not know. Hypocrisy is not, after all, the worst of vices, and it does have its advantages. *Advertising Age* tells us that a Mr. Dempster, manager of one of Chicagoland's largest newsstands, was asked if he puts *Penthouse* in paper bags for shy customers.

'Yes, and I also put it in the profit column.'

(RAV) □

In the Mail

Renascence: Essays on Values in Literature edited by Joseph Schwartz; Marquette University Press; Milwaukee, Wisconsin. A quarterly publication featuring essays on various aspects of literature, books and authors.

What Price Freedom? by Lubor J. Zink; Griffin House; Toronto, Canada. A study of the nature and scope of the Soviet threat and comments on the West's incomprehension, by a Canadian of Czechoslovakian birth.

LIBERAL CULTURE

Backward, Christian Soldiers

As reported by the *National Catholic Register*, Bishop Thomas F. Gumbleton, auxiliary bishop of Detroit and president of Pax Christi-USA, exhorted his audience in Los Angeles on November 6, 1981 to "surrender to the invader. Let yourself be dominated."

We would love to see him issuing orders to Pope Urban II, Saint Bernard de Clairvaux, Godfrey of Bouillon, Saint Louis and, later, one Miguel Cervantes during the battle of Lepanto.

Prince

The title is the name of a rock performer of mixed Italian-Negro parentage who performs on stage wearing only a meager strip of fabric over his genitals. He has all the erotic appeal of a deodorized louse. He is now being frantically promoted by the entire liberal-cultural establishment—from the *New York Times* to *Rolling Stone*—as the most vivid threat to "the establishment." Prince sings:

Some people call me rude
I wish we all were nude
I wish there was no black or white
I wish there were no rules

We feel confused. Which establishment? We have always thought that both the *New York Times* and *Rolling Stone* are the establishment. Haven't they taught us, for the last two decades, that the wish to have no rules is the noblest social morality, one that permits the theft of

the Pentagon Papers and offers 12-year-old girls to rock stars for defloratory activities?

Prince's philosophical program and poetic brilliance make the ecstatic *Chicago Tribune* print Prince's picture with the caption: "Prince: Challenging the sexual and racial stereotypes of today." The editors of that fount of profundity do not explain what is left that can be challenged in America, or what stereotype hasn't already been pulverized. The worshipping *New York Times* News Service sums up the phenomenon: "In other words, for Prince, sexual liberation is both a political program and a religion." The last word makes us remember that those whom the gods want to destroy . . .

Nostalgie de la boue

Anne Tyler, a noted novelist, writes in *The New Republic*:

On the cover of *Neighborhood: A State of Mind*, four children mug for the camera beneath a clothesline full of underwear. All four look tough and happy and impudent. There is something both humorous and fierce in the muscleman stance that two of them adopt. The underwear hanging over them is riddled with holes, the wall behind them is cracked and scabby, and the row houses in the background have tacked-on porches and rotting windowsills; but this is obviously not a scene of deprivation. On the contrary, you feel a little pang

of envy. You wouldn't mind stepping into the picture yourself.

Message

IPC Films is a company of Ms. Jane Fonda, ally of communist Hanoi, which specializes in message movies like *Coming Home* or *The China Syndrome*. The messages are simple: socialism good, anything that opposes it bad; America corrupt, anyone who tries to vanquish her good; radical causes lily-white, those who disbelieve in them monsters. IPC's latest production is a movie called *Rollover* which unmasks and exposes corporate villainy in high finance. Of the artistic and ideological principle and methodology of IPC's filmmaking, the movie's producer, Mr. Bruce Gilbert, says:

We're trying to give the audience the sense of having the veil lifted. We want to show how money-center banks operate, even though we've ignored or oversimplified some things by dramatic license.

What Mr. Gilbert is actually saying is that he and the other authors of *Rollover* have indulged in bald, insolent lying. They don't give a damn whether their movie equates with reality, actuality, truth, correctness of fact. They call their lies "oversimplification" or "dramatic license." But they are not fraudulent liars; they are creative artists who "ignore" accuracy. By the way, rumor has it that the "I" in the name of their corporation stands for "Indochina." They prefer not to advertise it publicly. Old allegiances never die—they don't even fade away. □

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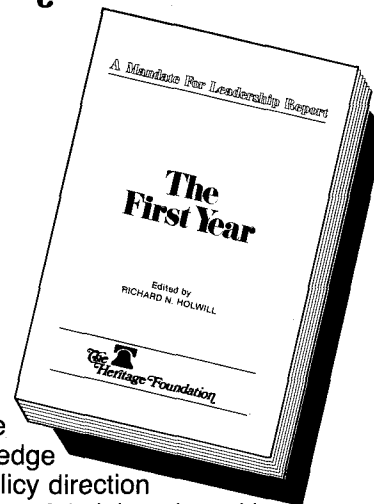
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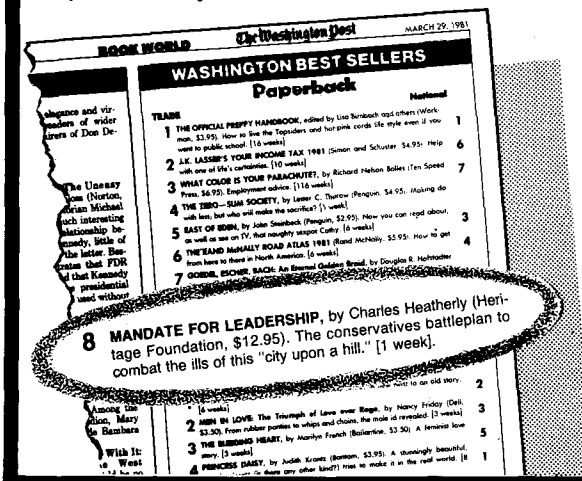
When *Mandate for Leadership* came out last year, Ronald Reagan said, "The material combined mastery of the federal bureaucracy with a no-nonsense plan to cut it down to size. We've been using it to our and the country's advantage ever since, and by remaining so thorough, to-the-point, and up-to-date, The Heritage Foundation's research continues to be useful to us and to our policy-making process. As a matter of fact, one of the people its been most useful to—and used by—is me."

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